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# Outdoor Photography

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# EDITOR'S LETTER

## IT'S HARD TO SHOUT

I've spent time over the last few weeks wondering why outdoor photographers with wonderfully creative minds and the extraordinary ability to bring their thoughts to life through their work often suffer from a lack of confidence. It's easy to pin it on creative work being very much reflective of the individual, and so showing that work opens photographers up to critique that may be perceived as damning personal comment rather than about what he or she produces. But I suspect it isn't that simple.

I recall Niall Benvie once telling me how the very nature of what outdoor photographers do – seek out quiet and unspoiled areas to photograph landscapes or wildlife – means that the genre attracts people who are far more likely to shun than court attention. Niall went on to point out that the situation is exacerbated when a photographer becomes more commercially active, and they have to fight their natural instincts to be able to market and sell themselves and their work – getting ahead in

this game is, after all, becoming increasingly about the size of your profile as it is the quality of your work.

Apart from a well-known Australian landscape photographer with a penchant for world record breaking print sales, it is quite rare to find outdoor photographers who truly revel in these kinds of business scenarios. Most not only have to overcome the obvious fear of selling personal work but also need to battle their inherent desire to be far from the madding crowd to be comfortable with self-promotion. That's some challenge.

Rather than seeing this as a major weakness within the genre, I am beginning to see it as a strength we should be proud of. In a world where we are bombarded with well-honed messages from just about every company and person we have to deal with in business, it is refreshingly human to have someone say to you, 'I'm pretty rubbish at selling myself.'

I know who is more likely to make me open my wallet.

*Steve Watkins*



### GET IN TOUCH

**EMAIL** Contact the Editor, Steve Watkins, at [steve@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:steve@thegmcgroup.com) or Deputy Editor, Claire Blow, at [claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com)

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### COVER IMAGE

This wonderful image of a hawthorn tree in flower at sunrise was taken by Irish photographer Norman McCloskey, author of *Parklight* – a stunning collection of photographs from Killarney National Park.

## THE ISSUE at a glance



Joe Wright talks about his love of forgotten locations – *page 18*



Lee Frost guides us through creating panoramic images – *page 28*



Ben Pipe's insightful portraits of Ethiopian tribes – *page 66*



Andy Luck tests and rates the new Canon EOS 7D MkII – *page 90*



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#### **Joe Wright**

Nick Smith interviews landscape photographer Joe Wright, who finds beauty in the ordinary with his complex and intimate portraits of rural Britain

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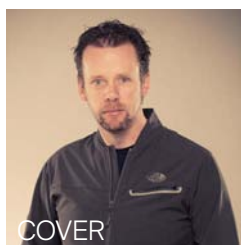
Identify the location featured and you could win a Case Logic Kontrast pro-DSLR backpack, worth £129.99!

## NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 7 MAY 2015

- » How to capture stunning photographs of trees
- » In conversation with wildlife photographer Bertie Gregory
- » Quick guide to shooting with ND grad filters



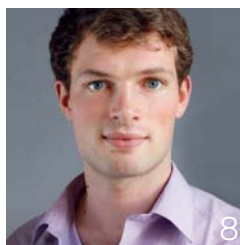
# IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



COVER

**Norman McCloskey** has been photographing the Irish landscape for over 20 years and is passionate about working in the surroundings he has a deep connection with. He has been known to travel further afield to colder climates, and in 2008 spent three weeks in Antarctica.

[normanmcloskey.com](http://normanmcloskey.com)



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**Alex Nail** is a photographer based in Bristol with a passion for capturing remote landscapes. He loves to seek out spectacular light, and wild camps in Scotland and round Britain's national parks throughout the seasons.

[alexnail.com](http://alexnail.com)



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Having spent many of his formative years living and working in the countryside it was inevitable that when **Joe Wright** picked up a camera it would be directed at the landscape. He aspires to show intimate aspects of the landscape that often go unnoticed.

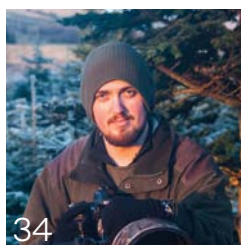
[joewrightphotography.com](http://joewrightphotography.com)



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Over the last 20 years, **Lee Frost** has become one of the UK's leading landscape and travel photographers and one of the world's bestselling photography authors. He also leads sell-out photo workshops and tours.

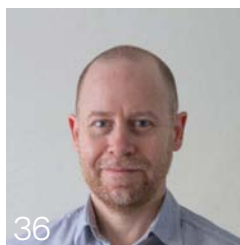
[leefrost.co.uk](http://leefrost.co.uk)



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**Kirk Norbury** is a young nature photographer based in Ayr, Scotland. He specialises in wildlife, landscapes and the beautiful night skies of the British Isles, and primarily works around the Galloway Forest in south-west Scotland.

[kirknorburyphoto.com](http://kirknorburyphoto.com)



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**Craig Denford** is a graphic designer moonlighting as a landscape and wildlife photographer. Based in Surrey, Craig is passionate about photographing in this often-overlooked part of the world.

[craigdenfordphotography.co.uk](http://craigdenfordphotography.co.uk)



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**John Dominick** is manager of a photographic retailer and studio in Bognor Regis. He also has numerous clients for his personal work, and runs landscape workshops in Sussex.

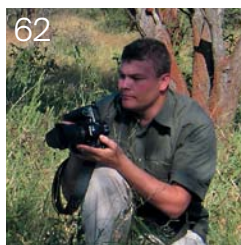
[johndominick.com](http://johndominick.com)



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**David Noton** regularly shoots for the National Trust and his other clients include British Airways, Sainsbury's and the *Sunday Times*. He also tours his Chasing the Light Road Show, an inspiring audiovisual presentation.

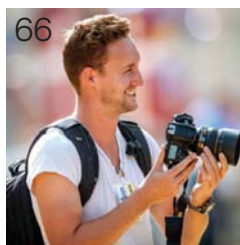
[davidnoton.com](http://davidnoton.com)



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**Chris Weston** is a professional wildlife photojournalist. He has travelled widely to document the issues and challenges facing many of the world's rarest species and is the principal photographer for the NGO Animals on the Edge.

[chrisweston.photography](http://chrisweston.photography)



66

**Ben Pipe** is a London-based travel and portrait photographer. Since graduating in photography he has travelled the world with a camera – from the Sahara desert to the Himalaya. He was a finalist in Travel Photographer of the Year 2011 and his work is widely published.

[benpipe.com](http://benpipe.com)



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**Kevin Sawford** is a professional wildlife photographer based in East Anglia. He runs workshops for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, plus a number of other events. His work is represented by several picture agencies, including the RSPB image library.

[kevinsawford.com](http://kevinsawford.com)



81

**Nick Smith** is a writer and photographer specialising in travel and environmental issues. He is a contributing editor on the *Explorers Journal* and is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

[nicksmithphoto.com](http://nicksmithphoto.com)

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

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# Outdoor Photography

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## The Madonna

*by Alex Nail*

This was taken at 'the Madonna' halfway through a nine-day backpacking trip along the Drakensberg Escarpment in South Africa. In the mornings, mist regularly filled the valley floor some 100m below, adding a lot of atmosphere to an already spectacular place. Throughout the hike there were endless plummeting views and towering pinnacles of rock, yet despite this incredible scenery we were totally alone – we saw no one the entire time we were there. It's a place I hope to return to soon.

*Canon EOS 6D with EF 16-35mm f/4 L IS USM lens at 16mm, ISO 100, three exposures at 1/10sec, 1/4sec and 0.7sec at f/13, merged in post-processing*









# NEWSROOM

CONSERVATION

NEW LAUNCHES

COMPETITIONS

OUTDOORS

TECHNOLOGY

OTHER NEWS

## Lake District land sell-off sparks conservation fears



© S. Francis/Shutterstock.com

Stickle Tarn, in the Langdale Pikes, is one of seven sites being sold by the Lake District National Park Authority.

The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) is to sell off seven of its sites, including famous beauty spot Stickle Tarn, in an effort to raise much-needed cash.

A total of 100 acres of land are up for sale. They include Yewbarrow Woods near Kendal, a 36-acre site with ancient mosses, oak and hazel trees; Blea Brows, a picturesque stretch of shoreline on Conistone Water; and Baneriggs Wood in Grasmere, a mature deciduous woodland that's home to red squirrels and rare birds.

More than 165,000 people signed a petition set up by 38 Degrees opposing the land sell-offs. The online campaign group warns that there are plans to sell off parts of the Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District national parks next if a precedent is set.

Richard Leafe, who runs the LDNPA, admitted that government cuts were partly responsible for the sell-off – its budget has been cut by 23% over the past five years. But he also points out that the park authority holds less than 4% of the land in the national park and is selling just 0.2% of it. All land remains subject to the planning framework of the

Lake District National Park and will have to remain fully accessible to the public.

Mark Hoggar, head of resources for the national park authority said: 'We have safeguarded and strengthened public access where it already exists and included other conditions to protect the special qualities.'

UK conservation body the Open Spaces Society has concerns about the sale, however. General secretary Kate Ashbrook said: 'A new owner may not have national park purposes at heart but may be driven by the potential commercial benefits to be wrung from the site. Although such development would require planning permission, and the national park authority would, we hope, reject it, the development might be granted on appeal.'

She added: 'We have great sympathy with the park authorities who are suffering slashed budgets, and we back the Campaign for National Parks' battle against the cuts. But it is no solution to flog off land that should be held for the nation.'

[lakedistrict.gov.uk](http://lakedistrict.gov.uk)  
[oss.org.uk](http://oss.org.uk)

## Lynx rewilding project gathers momentum

An ambitious project to return wild lynx to parts of Britain is underway, more than 1,300 years after they disappeared from the country. If the UK Lynx Trust gets the go-ahead from the government, it plans to release cats on to three privately-owned estates in England and Scotland later this year. The trust is also looking at sites in Wales.

The confirmed sites are: Thetford Forest in Norfolk, Ennerdale in the Lake District and Grumack Forest in Aberdeenshire. Between four and six cats, fitted with tracking devices, would be released at each site.

The UK Lynx Trust believes the reintroduction of wild lynx would bring huge benefits to the British countryside, including helping to control deer numbers. Dr Paul O'Donoghue, the trust's Chief Scientific Advisor told *OP*: 'Lynx reintroduction is a win-win. It promotes biodiversity and is a major driver of rural economic regeneration. The countryside in Britain is broken and lynx will fix it.'

Not everyone is so enthusiastic, however, due to the expense of reintroducing large predators and the high risk of failure. A spokesperson from the National Farmers Union said it believes budgets are better focused on developing existing biodiversity.

The UK Lynx Trust is asking for people's opinions on the idea of reintroducing the species – to find out more about the project and to complete the survey visit [lynxuk.org](http://lynxuk.org).



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## Patchings Festival

The *Outdoor Photography* team is gearing up for its return to the Patchings Festival this summer. With a range of inspirational talks, workshops and demonstrations, it's an unmissable event for artists, photographers and craftspeople.

For the second year running, *OP* will host an exciting line-up of speakers at the festival, including regular columnist Pete Bridgwood, wildlife pro Andy Parkinson, former *Times* picture editor Paul Sanders and landscape photographer Joe Wright (interviewed on page 18). There will also be an opportunity to see an exhibition of the winning and commended images from our Outdoor Photographer of the Year 2014 competition.

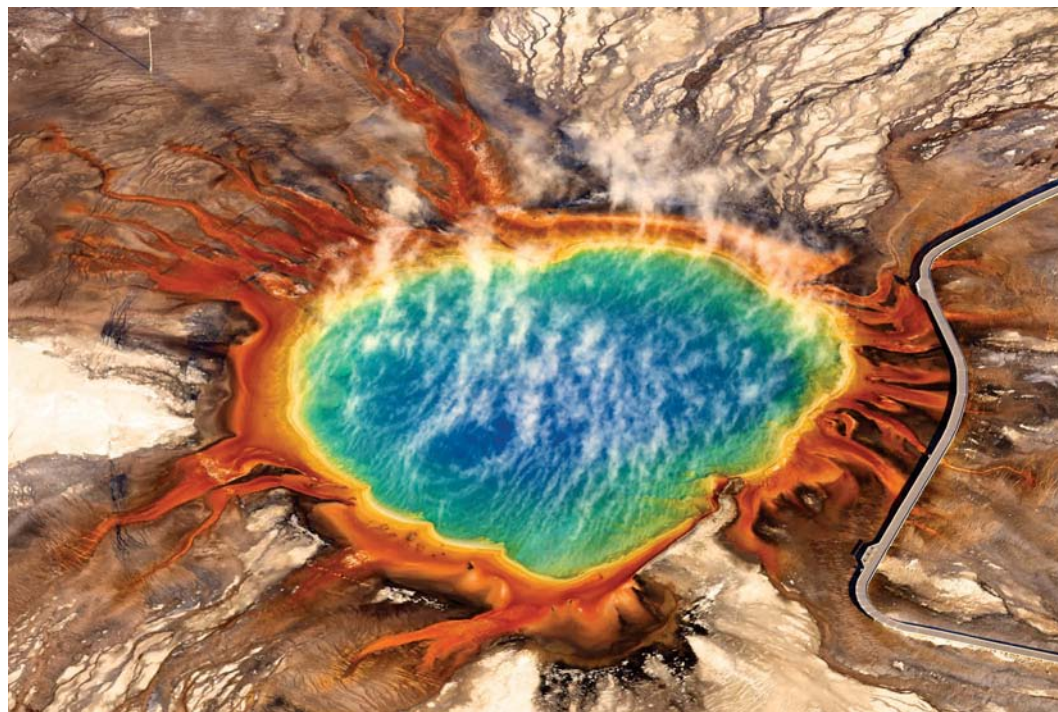
The festival runs from 4-8 June, close to the village of Calverton in Nottinghamshire, and tickets cost from £7.50. We'll reveal more about the event in the next issue of *OP*, and in the meantime you can find out the latest news at [patchingsfestival.co.uk](http://patchingsfestival.co.uk).

## British Wildlife Photography Awards – final call for entries!

The annual search for the UK's best wildlife images is coming to an end. Covering everything from animal behaviour, urban fauna and the marine world to the hidden creatures that live in the undergrowth, the British Wildlife Photography Awards celebrate the varied and wonderful wildlife found in and around Britain. The competition also showcases the incredible talent of photographers and filmmakers who seek to capture the country's wild side. Prizes include top products from Canon and £5,000 for the overall winner.

### OP readers' discount

Until midnight on 2 May, when you purchase four entry credits on the BWPA website (allowing you to submit up to 10 images), you can receive an extra credit for free – simply use the voucher code OPMAY15. So, if you want to enter 20 images in the Adult Competition, for example, you can pay for just 10. Each credit costs £5, and all of the fees are fully explained on the BWPA website: [bwpawards.org](http://bwpawards.org).



## Sony World Photography Awards: shortlists announced

The shortlists for the Sony World Photography Awards 2015 have been revealed. Images were selected from 173,444 entries from 171 countries – the highest number of submissions in the contest's eight-year history.

Those in the awards' Professional categories will now compete for a \$25,000 prize and the coveted L'Iris d'Or. The recipient, along with the Youth and Student competition winners and the Open Photographer of the Year, who receives a \$5,000 prize, will be announced at a special ceremony in London on 23 April. Shortlisted images will be on display at Somerset House, London, from 24 April to 10 May. Our favourite images from the competition will feature in a showcase in next month's *OP*.

To book tickets for the exhibition visit [worldphoto.org/2015exhibition](http://worldphoto.org/2015exhibition)

above Grand Prismatic Spring, Yellowstone, by Jassen Todorov: one of eight images shortlisted in the Nature & Wildlife category of the Open competition.

## Online print sales platform launches

A new service from professional photo printing lab theprintspace offers a quick, easy and secure way for photographers to sell their work online. Users of thehub simply upload their images and within minutes they can have them shared on social networks and other online channels. Anyone wanting to purchase the featured work can do so very easily. Theprintspace then handles everything – from production, packaging and posting to dealing any customer queries. The net proceeds from the sale, minus the base price of the print and a 10% handling fee, are then paid to the photographer.

Find out more and sign up to thehub at [theprintspace.co.uk](http://theprintspace.co.uk)



## List your adventures

If you need a little inspiration to help you to achieve your adventurous goals, look no further than Berghaus' new Adventure List app. The clever gizmo allows you to create aspirational hit-lists and tick them off as you go. You can share your lists with others via Facebook and Twitter and take inspiration from others' adventures. The app features a selection of recommended adventures together with suggested kit for each, or you can create your own from scratch. In addition, the software can use your phone's GPS to track your route and take geolinked images along the way. It can even help you create videos of your adventures.

The free app is available for iPhones and iPads, and can be downloaded from the App Store. Find out more at [community.berghaus.com/app](http://community.berghaus.com/app).



# OUT THERE

## IN PRINT

### Looking for Identity

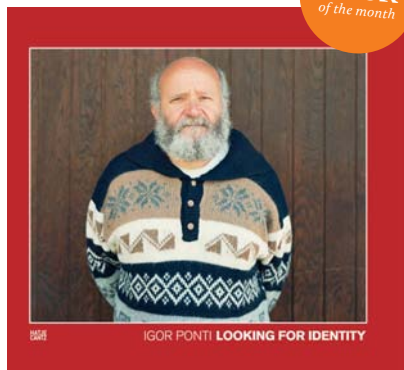
Igor Ponti

» Hatje Cantz

» 978-3-7757-3925-2

» Hardback, £35

Book  
of the month



The success of a photography project is often down to the theme that's being explored. If the topic has scope to work on a personal level for the photographer, spark the viewer's interest and invite a variety of interpretations, it will most probably endure. Looking at a country's identity is one such powerful theme in

photography – take Robert Frank's highly influential 1950s photo-book *The Americans* as an example. In *Looking for Identity*, Swiss-born photographer Igor Ponti follows Frank's footsteps and goes on a quest to learn about his native country. Photographing Switzerland's citizens, its landscape and ever-growing infrastructure, there is an overriding feeling in the pictures that this is a country very much in a state of change. Showing Switzerland grappling with its traditions and modernity, Ponti seeks out scenes where the two exist together. Familiar symbols, such as the red flag with the white cross, the Lindt chocolate label and statues of William Tell, are found alongside photographs of newly built roads, highways and viaducts. Switzerland is travelling towards a new identity, but what that identity is remains unknown.



Robert, Flüeli-Ranft, Obwalden, 2014



Tree House, Sorengo, Ticino, 2014

### International Garden Photographer of the Year: Collection Eight

Foreword by Tony Kirkham

» Garden Photo Press

» 978-0-9563973-2-4

» Paperback, £18.99

The winning and highly commended images from the eighth International Garden Photographer of the Year competition are brought together in this wonderful paperback book. Celebrating the beauty of our natural world, and the vital role plants play in our lives, this book showcases some of the world's most exciting established and emerging nature photographers. Divided into seven chapters according to this year's categories, the photographs explore themes such as Wildlife in the Garden, Breathing Spaces, Greening the City, and Wildflower Landscapes. To see our pick of the winning photographs from this year's competition, turn to page 53.



### Traveling Lights

Xavier Guardans

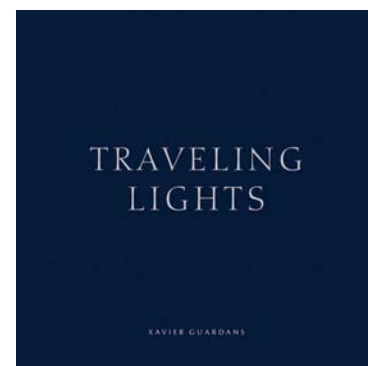
» Damiani

» 978-88-6208-387-4

» Hardback, £30

The 39 colour pictures printed here are all united by one motif: light. From a rotting tree in shot under harsh midday sun to a pick-up truck illuminated by a street lamp at night, Xavier Guardans picks out details in the landscape, both natural and manmade, to truly explore his subject. As writer and critic Amelia Rina points out in her brief text, these pictures remind us to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us every day.

Although Guardans' work is quiet, each image will stay with the viewer long after they have closed the book. Featuring images taken in 14 countries over a period of 18 years, *Traveling Lights* is the second volume in a series of five books by the Spanish photographer. The images are also part of his ongoing exploration of minimalism and light in diverse environments.





## NATURE PHOTO BOOKS TO INSPIRE

### British Moths: A Photographic Guide to the Moths of Britain and Ireland

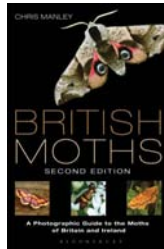
Chris Manley

» Bloomsbury

» 978-14729-0770-7

» Hardback, £40

With photographs, facts and information on how to identify 871 macro moths and 1,276 species of micro moths, this new edition of Chris Manley's wonderful book is the definitive guide to these remarkable insects. Maps on where to find each species are included, as well as introductory sections on habitat, life cycles, conservation and photographic techniques. *British Moths* should be on the bookshelf of all photographers interested in photographing the insect world.



### Nick Baker's British Wildlife: A Month-By-Month Guide

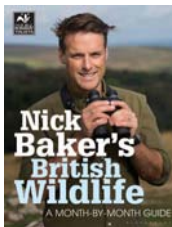
Nick Baker

» Bloomsbury

» 978-1-4729-1205-3

» Paperback, £12.99

This practical guide reveals Britain's wildlife through the seasons. An ideal reference for planning future photography trips, the book explains what is happening in nature in each month of the year. With useful tips on where to find a wide variety of wildlife – beautifully illustrated and brought to life with Nick Baker's lively text – this is a delightful read from cover to cover. Baker's facts on insect behaviour and identification may be of particular interest to those wanting to explore macro photography.



### Chris Packham's Wild Side of Town: Getting to Know the Wildlife in our Towns and Cities

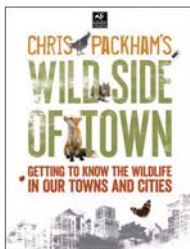
Chris Packham

» Bloomsbury

» 978-1-4729-1605-1

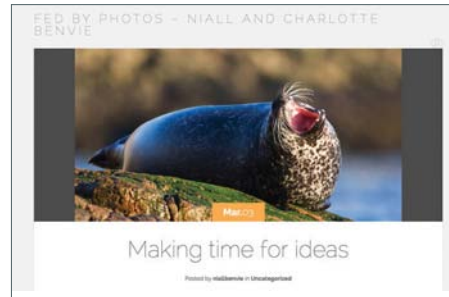
» Paperback, £16.99

Here, Chris Packham celebrates the modern city as a habitat for wildlife. Revealing the best urban sites and the animals that exist within them, this book is ideal for those wanting to discover nature on their doorstep. Written in Packham's signature humorous style, *Wild Side of Town* includes a field guide to frequently encountered species, a UK city site guide and amazing facts about the less desirable creatures we share our cities with.



## FIVE GREAT BLOGS TO FOLLOW

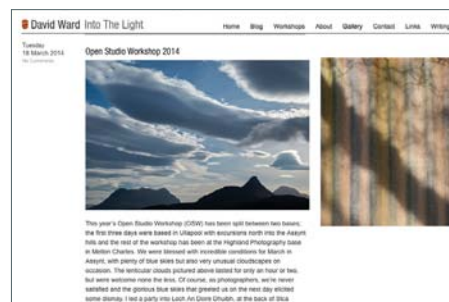
Blogs can take on a variety of forms: they can be places for the writer to process ideas and share information, a space to log what they've been up to or a way to keep their followers updated with recent work and influences. Here are five blogs we've bookmarked on our web browser...



### Niall and Charlotte Benvie

*OP* columnist Niall Benvie has recently reincarnated his blog. Collaborating with his wife, Charlotte, here they focus on posting about how they make their living as freelance creatives. Full of inspiration, and illustrated through engaging design, posts of particular interest include 'How people make decisions' and 'Making time for ideas'.

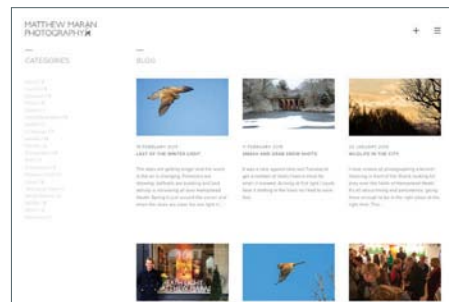
[imagesfromtheedge.com/blog](http://imagesfromtheedge.com/blog)



### David Ward

If you enjoy reading David's musings in his regular *OP* Opinion column, you'll find his blog a resource that's poetic, informative and endlessly thought provoking. Posting his ideas every few months or so gives you time to unpack and process his ideas on photography. We recommend these posts: 'Creels' and 'Calm before the storm'.

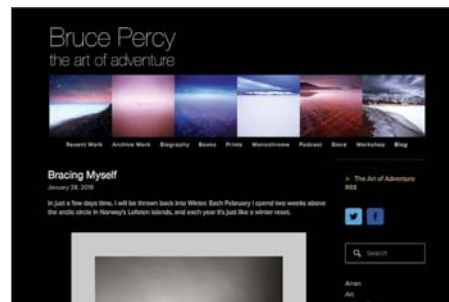
[into-the-light.com/blog](http://into-the-light.com/blog)



### Matthew Maran

London-based wildlife photographer Matthew Maran has spent the last few years focusing on one subject: exploring the array of wildlife found on Hampstead Heath. Posting on a regular basis with an engaging style and stunning wildlife pictures, Matthew's blog is an endless supply of inspiring content. Make sure you check out his posts 'Wildlife in the city' and 'Common Terns at Hampstead Heath'.

[matthewmaran.com/blog](http://matthewmaran.com/blog)



### Bruce Percy

Landscape and travel photographer Bruce Percy creates fine art pictures that resonate with the viewer. In his blog, Bruce reveals the thinking behind many of his images, as well as sharing useful technical information on subjects such as focal lengths, sharpening your images and planning a shoot. We found his post 'Your Own Voice' – found under the 'Self Awareness' category – particularly fascinating.

[brucepercy.co.uk/blog](http://brucepercy.co.uk/blog)



### Doug Chinnery

Choosing to update his blog once a month, landscape photographer Doug Chinnery offers a wealth of information on his site. He shares tips on subjects every photographer should know, such as hard-proofing techniques and how to add copyright details to files in Adobe Lightroom. Other posts include beautiful photobooks he has come across and new work from his photography trips.

[dougchinnery.com/blog](http://dougchinnery.com/blog)



# THE BIG VIEW



1

© Andy Bell



2

## EXHIBITIONS

### 1 Landscape Collective UK

» 24 April to 10 July

» The Royal United

Hospitals, Bath

Made up of 13 photographers, Landscape Collective UK is a group of talented individuals who are creating something new within the landscape genre. Meeting every two months to show and discuss work, members include David Baker, Andy Bell and Tony Worobiec. The collective have their inaugural exhibition this spring at the Royal United Hospitals, Bath. Susan Brown's Tide Pool series and Paul Mitchell's black & white pinhole coastal pictures may be of particular interest. The group's website is [lcuk.photo.ruh.nhs.uk/art](http://lcuk.photo.ruh.nhs.uk/art)

### 2 Light on the Land: North Yorkshire in Black & White

» To 3 May

» Belmont Studios Gallery, North Yorkshire

Having trained as a painter at art college, Alan Clark turned to photography when he was intrigued by the potential of the black & white image. Here we see Alan's pictures of the North Yorkshire countryside that he has taken over the past 10 years. He mainly uses large format film cameras, many of which he has made himself, and prints all his own work in his darkroom. A selection of pictures from Alan's recent documentary project on farming in the Ryedale area will also be on display. [belmontstudios.co.uk](http://belmontstudios.co.uk)

3

© Alexander Lindsay



## EXHIBITION WITH A DIFFERENCE



© Corinne Silva

### Garden State

» Ffotogallery, Penarth

» To 2 May

In Garden State, London-based artist Corinne Silva uses photographs and sound to explore how the Israeli State uses landscaping to exert control over the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Displaying works from her series Wounded and Gardening the Suburbs, which took Corinne to national parks and suburban gardens close to the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, the show raises questions about how political and military influences impact the landscape. Garden State travels to the Mosaic Rooms, London from 14 May to 23 June ([mosaicrooms.org](http://mosaicrooms.org)). [ffotogallery.org](http://ffotogallery.org)



### 3 Altitude

» 8 April to 6 June

» *Piano Nobile Kings Place, London*

Alexander Lindsay's latest project highlights how adventure and landscape photographers are travelling further to create unique images. Shot during an epic 20,000-mile, eight-month long expedition across South America, the pictures on display capture the variety of vistas he saw along the way. He endured the relentless winds of the Atacama Desert and air temperatures as low as -20°C. His efforts paid off: his panoramas (digitally stitched) capture the raw magnificence of nature and hold a presence that demands the viewers' attention. Printed at 40-feet wide, viewers can get up close and marvel at the sharply rendered details.

[piano-nobile.com](http://piano-nobile.com)

### 4 New Work: Joe Cornish

» 1 to 30 May

» *Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton*

Joe Cornish is known for his unrivalled understanding of light and composition. The pictures on show have been selected from Joe's travels and projects

from the past 12 months. He says: 'I remain convinced that themes from nature are never exhausted. Continuing to develop a language of light and form that illuminates the subject without drawing too much attention to me remains at the heart of my mission.'

[joecornishgallery.co.uk](http://joecornishgallery.co.uk)



© Joe Cornish

## SPRING WALKS

### Ulverston Walkfest

» 25 April to 4 May

Located at the top of the Furness Peninsula, Ulverston is well positioned for access to both Morecambe Bay and the Lake District mountains, making it a mecca for walkers. Now in its 16th year, the festival is a great way to discover new areas and skills. Highlights this year include An Introduction to Basic Map Reading Skills and Sunset on North Walney.

[ulverstonwalkfest.co.uk](http://ulverstonwalkfest.co.uk)

### Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival

» 1 to 10 May

The birthplace of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire is a World Heritage Site full of natural beauty. Events throughout this nine-day festival range from all-day hikes to short, informative walks. We think walk number 35 – South Telford Heritage Trail – is of particular interest for its spectacular views.

[visitironbridge.co.uk/walkingfestival](http://visitironbridge.co.uk/walkingfestival)

### North Devon and Exmoor Walking Festival

» 2 to 9 May

Found in one of the most beautiful corners of the UK, Exmoor and North Devon are full of walking routes for you to enjoy. Take advantage of the dramatic coastline by joining the Rocky Valley Panorama walk, a route where you'll see glimpses of rocky bays, cliffs and woodlands before finishing at Lee Bay.

[exmoorwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://exmoorwalkingfestival.co.uk)

### Spring Walking Festival, Guernsey

» 2 to 17 May

This May, why not travel to Guernsey and get to know the island on foot by joining in its Spring Walking Festival. Walks we recommend include Towers, Tombs and Trails around the Close du Valle, where you'll learn about Guernsey's ancient history, and Stride 'n' Ride, a cycling and walking tour of the island.

[visitguernsey.com/spring-walking-festival](http://visitguernsey.com/spring-walking-festival)

### Waendel Walk 2015

» 8 to 10 May

Held at the Castle Theatre, Wellingborough, and with new and improved routes, a choice of walks of different lengths and free entertainment throughout the weekend, there is something to appeal to all abilities at Waendel Walk 2015. We recommend the 16-mile walk, field and track event.

[thecastle.org.uk/waendel](http://thecastle.org.uk/waendel)

### Chesterfield Walking Festival

» 9 to 17 May

Run by fully trained guides who know the history, wildlife and best parts of the surrounding countryside to discover, this festival is a great opportunity to explore Derbyshire. Most of the walks are free; we recommend Chesterfield Round Walk, a 34-mile countryside trek.

[chesterfieldwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://chesterfieldwalkingfestival.co.uk)

## MASTERS' VOICES

This spring is full of inspiring talks from some of the UK's most prominent photographers and adventurers; here are just a few of them to look out for...

### New Frontiers: Pete Cairns

» *The McAuley Catholic High School, Doncaster*

» 24 April

A wildlife photographer known for his strong ethical beliefs on conservation, Pete Cairns holds his subjects' wellbeing at the core of his work. With a catalogue of stunning pictures and fascinating stories to share, Pete's talk is sure to inspire all who attend.

Tickets cost £12 and are available from [doncastercameraclub.co.uk](http://doncastercameraclub.co.uk)



### Breaking Mongolia: The Lonely Snow Leopard

» *Various venues around the UK*

» *Tour starts from 16 April*

At just 23 years old, Ash Dykes completed a solo 1,500-mile walk across Mongolia – the first person known to have achieved this feat. He will recount his thrilling experiences and talk about the challenges he faced and the determination needed to complete such an epic journey unsupported.

Tickets cost from £9 to £15 depending on venue; see [speakersfromtheedge.com](http://speakersfromtheedge.com)

### Ray Mears

» *Keswick Mountain Festival, Cumbria*

» 16 May

Among the main highlights for the 2015 Keswick Mountain Festival is bushcraft and survival expert Ray Mears' talk. Having travelled to some of the world's most uninhabitable places, Ray has many exhilarating stories to tell from his 20-year career surviving in wilderness areas.

Ticket costs vary from £22 to £28; see [keswickmountainfestival.co.uk](http://keswickmountainfestival.co.uk) for more details



Discover the wonders of the blue planet with the International Ocean Film Tour. With six of the best watersports and underwater films of the year, highlights include *And Then We Swam*, in which rowing rookies Ben Stenning and James Adair row across the Indian Ocean; *Attractive Distractions*, which shows the world's best surfing spots; and *The Crystal Labyrinth*, which follows Brian Kakuk and Brett Hemphill as they explore underwater caves.

Various dates and venues around the UK; for details and to find your nearest screening go to [oceanfilmtour.com](http://oceanfilmtour.com)





# Your letters

Write to us! We love getting your views and responses; email [claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com)

LETTER  
OF THE  
MONTH

## Battling with convention

I was very interested in David Ward's Opinion piece (OP189). In the same way that he offers thoughts inspired by the work of Jem Southam, I would like, rather than respond directly, to offer a few thoughts of my own, inspired by David's words.

Art in whatever form is a personal journey, but it's also a constant and demanding struggle to be free of conventions. This struggle, if you're lucky, leads you to a place where you are praised to the skies and above (whether in your lifetime or not) and your work commands high prices. Along the way, however, until some opinion-former has marked you out with their seal of approval, at best your work will be greeted with incomprehension or derision, more likely it will be ignored altogether, except by the few who 'get' it.

It's not easy. You don't just have to battle with others; you have to battle with yourself. We all default to the conventional, and if we have the technical ability and equipment to make works of high quality, we'll be rewarded for doing so.

And yet some of us try to break free of convention. Why? Is it that we are staking all on the big rewards of being a collectable photographer? I don't think so – for one thing it's foolish to stake everything on something entirely beyond your control, and for another you risk being trapped by the expectations of others.

No, it's because something in us isn't satisfied with the conventional. Partly it is to do with finding a place for ourselves, but mostly it's because we want to produce something that expresses our own unique vision. Not being different for the sake of being different, but making a image that is not the same as any other competent photographer would have made if he or she had been standing in the same spot. If that's what Jem Southam is about, then good luck to him – and a big thank you to him also for rattling a few complacent cages, mine included, and reminding us that there's more to photography than winning at other people's games.

**Graham Hobbs, Poole**

Package Travel Regulations (PTR) 1992.

A recent advert I saw for an overseas photography holiday led to me having a quick look at the tour operator. I found that the company is not complying with the PTR in a number of ways, and so I brought this to their attention in a polite email. Their reply indicated the level of misunderstanding that exists around package holidays, in as much as they thought that because they were not including flights to the destination, it wasn't a package. This is incorrect. 'Package' means the pre-arranged combination of at least two of these three components: transport, accommodation, and other tourist services that account for a significant proportion of the package. Additionally, the package must extend over 24 hours or include overnight accommodation and must be offered for sale at an inclusive price.

I have seen first-hand what can – even with the best organisation, planning and goodwill – go wrong in developing countries, having had to deal with issues both on the ground in-country and as part of a team in the office. While non-compliance with the PTR is a civil matter, the consequences have the potential to turn criminal.

My advice for anyone considering a photographic holiday is to have a look at the Net Lawman website: [netlawman.co.uk/ia/holiday-packages-consumers](http://netlawman.co.uk/ia/holiday-packages-consumers). When looking for a supplier, make sure they are bonded or have some other approved arrangement in place.

**Carl Welsby, Crymmych**

## Minimal tweaks

Photographic manipulation is always necessary to a point. But in my view, if an image taken on a camera becomes a creation that is made up almost entirely from something that wasn't original, how can it be called a photograph?

I'm sure you have heard it all before. And I know times change. But please let us remember the original art of taking an image, which is to create using a camera and light. Post-production tweaks to a photograph should be kept to the absolute minimum.

**Thomas Latcham, via email**

**May's letter of the month winner, Graham Hobbs, receives a MindShift Gear Filter Nest wallet, worth £41**

MindShift Gear's padded, zip-up Filter Nest wallet fits eight round filters (up to 82mm) and can be attached to a belt, pack or tripod for easy access. Designed to protect lens filters from dust or scratches, each Filter Nest sleeve is colour coded to help speed up your filter changes when lining up a shot.

Available in the UK from [snapperstuff.com](http://snapperstuff.com)

## Shooting to win

We're often advised to take our time when shooting and to initially keep the camera in its bag; to begin by getting a feel of the location and use our creativity to interpret what we see.

Photography's claim to be an art form is undermined by the huge number of competitions held by camera clubs, however. Art is rarely competitive; rather it relies on reflection, observation and deliberate application.

*Outdoor Photography* magazine has a healthy mix between the contemplative and the high octane – an example camera clubs perhaps should follow.

Shouldn't clubs have fewer photography competitions and allocate more time to reflection and learning? To take time and not race through the year as though the judge's opinion is all that matters at the end of a long, hard photographic season. Perhaps we need to leave the camera in its bag more often...

**Barry Edge, via email**

## Shady characters

I just wanted to make a comment about something that is in *OP* every

month that really bugs me.

It's about the contributors' page, in which the photographers featured are often wearing dark sunglasses for their portrait shots, hiding their eyes – Lee Frost is the prime culprit. They may as well be wearing motorcycle helmets.

Sorry, but it just bugs me. If you are going to show people's faces then let's see their whole face.

Anyway, rant over – I'll let you get back to your work.

**Steve Cain, Chippenham**

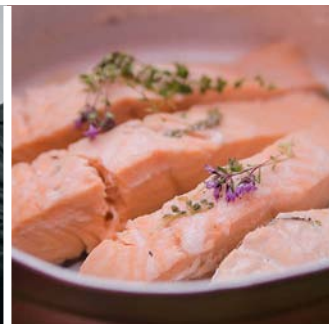
**Ed's comment** *We'll see if we can convince them to part with their sunglasses for a brief moment. At least I had the courtesy to put mine on top of my head for my photo on the Ed's Letter page!*

## Holiday protection

Prior to moving to Wales I spent many years in the adventure travel industry, designing and operating adventure holidays all over the world. I worked for two of the UK's best known adventure holiday companies and gained an understanding of the industry and how it relates to the law, particularly the







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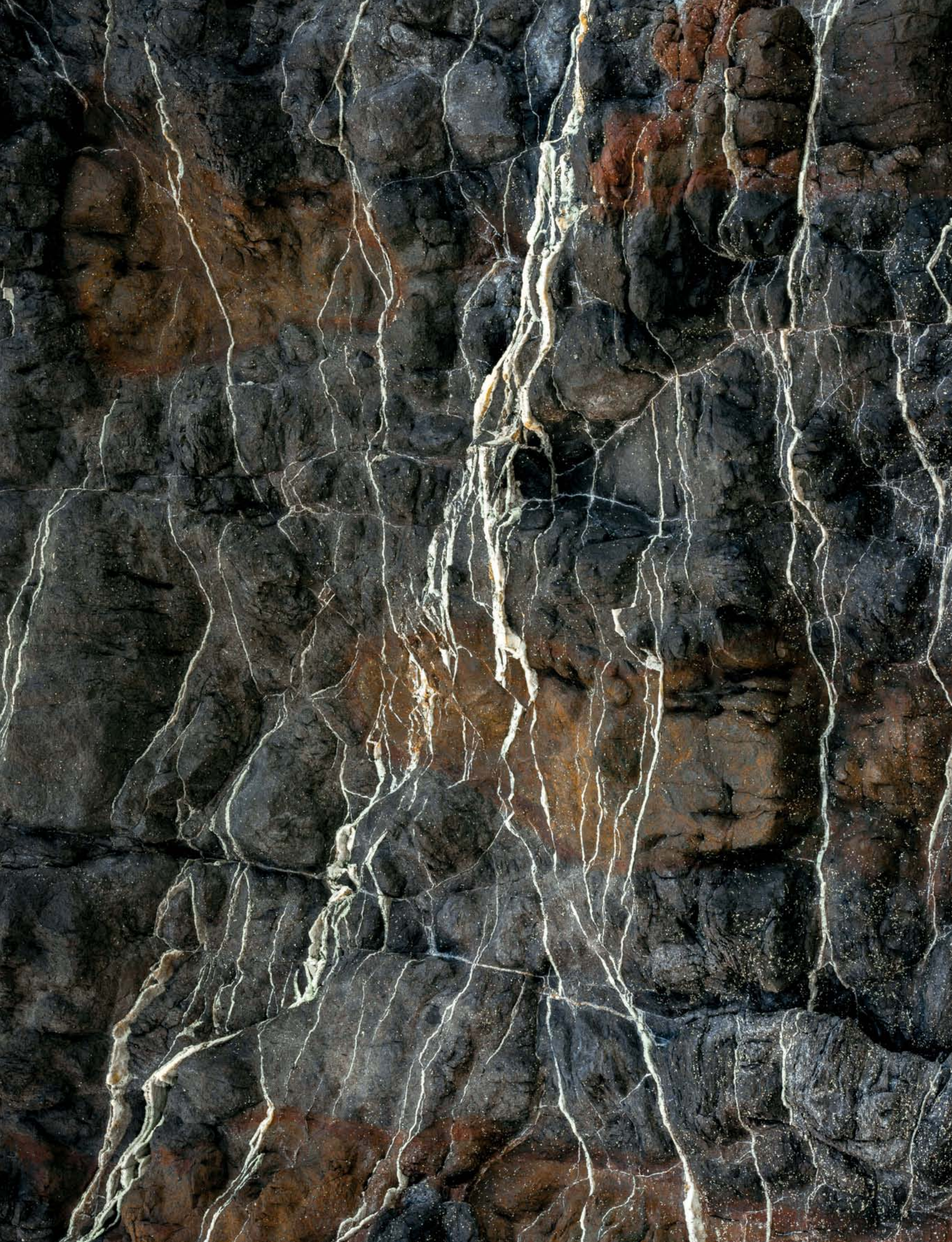
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## IN CONVERSATION WITH Joe Wright

*Landscape photographer Joe Wright brings to his highly complex and intricate visions of rural Britain a depth of artistic vision that casts an extraordinary new light on the forgotten edge-lands of the countryside*

Interview by Nick Smith

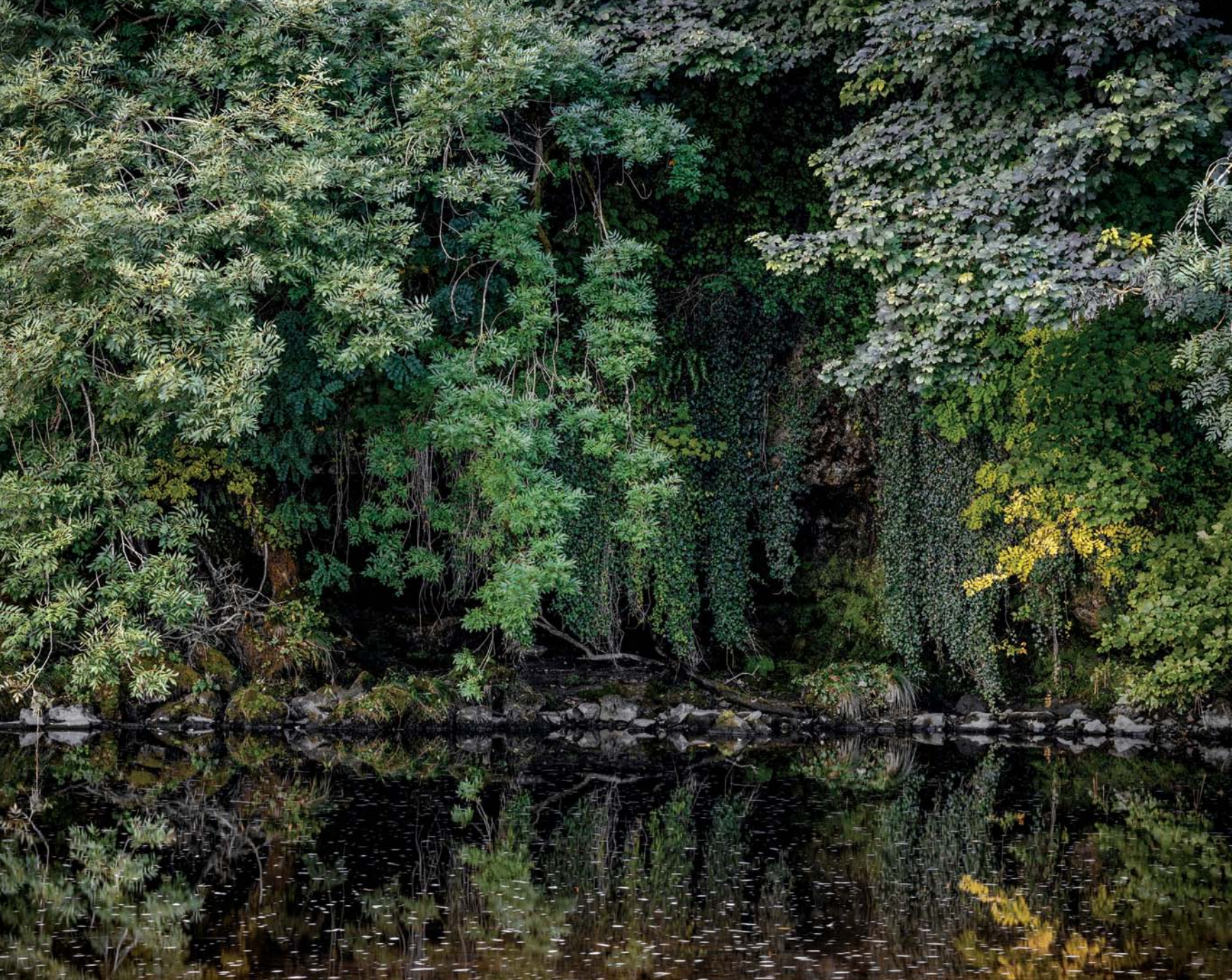
Visiting Joe Wright's website, one of the first things you notice – apart from the stupendous opening shot of tangled woodland reflected in rural floodwaters – is that the photographer describes himself as an artist. In person, he clarifies this statement by saying 'I'm a documentary storyteller using photography to try to tell a narrative. I'm looking to present more than just a cosmetic view of the landscape, trying to scratch beneath the skin of the

landscape itself. Hopefully this is obvious in the way that I have arranged the portfolios as stories.'

Wright maintains that these stories are not necessarily reducible to words: 'the intent is that the imagery itself is the story. I know that perhaps I shouldn't really be adding words to the narrative, because that might undermine the power of the pictures. But I am conscious that there is sometimes the need for a little bit of a preamble to set the scene and to get

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people's thoughts into the right place.'

The very first words that appear on Wright's website are 'intimate portraits of the landscape'. And so the first question I pose is how, as an artist, he can achieve this intimacy. Wright says that he sometimes wonders too, 'but, I guess that's part of the process. I read philosophy and look at other branches of art and craft, trying to explore what drives that inner vision and the need to create.' But he also spends a huge amount of time out in the countryside.

Wright, whose new book *The Floods* is out in May, lives in the small village of Purton near Swindon. He grew up on a farm and spent much of his early career with the Air Cadets and the Royal Air Force in the countryside, as well as in Northern Ireland and the Middle East. 'A lot of my childhood was spent in the Lake District and I think that all of those outdoor activities must have some sort of effect on you.' The photographer, who is now 52, started out with no inclination towards the visual arts. 'Any interest I might have had was purely from a technical perspective: engineering, technical drawing. In terms of left brain/right brain alignment, you could say things have almost completely reversed today.' It was only through defining

moments – 'trips of a lifetime where I had quality time in the countryside' – and advances in camera technology that he found his route into landscape photography. 'As you start to age, you become more reflective and these early experiences become more predominant. As you start to understand yourself more, you're able to look at your work more objectively.'

Perhaps one of the most crucial elements in Wright's photography is that, for a photographer in the digital age, he takes remarkably few photographs. Wright explains that there are plenty of times when he will go out on a recce without taking any equipment with him. One of the reasons for this is that a defining aspect of his work is that he still shoots with film, employing a Canham 8x10 and a Chamonix 4x5 with Kodak and Fuji film. 'Ninety per cent of my photography is shot on large format cameras. That forces a certain approach: it's about discipline and making sure that when you press the shutter you are certain that you have the image that you want to make.'

When Wright first became a serious photographer, for most the entry point was digital 'and that was a technology that was interesting to me.' But with the passing years he started to





realise that this medium was failing to deliver the artistic satisfaction he was seeking: 'while others were moving from film to digital, I was going the other way. Because I don't have to make my living from photography, I found I was able to spend more time learning about film – as well as the practices and processes that come with it – to make it my primary mechanism making a photograph.'

Much of Wright's subject matter is visually complex. There are very few wide-open empty spaces, clear skies or broad expanses of water. What you get is a portfolio of highly intricate, richly textured, immaculately thought out imagery with layer upon layer of detail, which seems to break with the established norms of keeping landscapes stripped to the bone. But Wright is not particularly interested in what these established norms might be. Paradoxically, he has a clarity of vision that expresses itself by trying to find what he calls 'simplicity and order' in the elemental chaos that nature seems to construct around him.

He also finds trying to impose photographic rules on what he does confining, preferring to concentrate on what 'the images are, rather than creating them in the way that we might think

we want them to be.' Wright says he finds some forms of composition very contrived, especially when he senses the photographer has been hijacked in a certain direction 'in order to please others rather than themselves. I am very much about doing what I enjoy and what I think is right. I know others may not relate to that. But that is something with which I feel completely comfortable.'

'I don't know whether it's that I have an innate ability to resolve some of these images and to derive the underlying story through the body of the work, but the images aren't really about the place. While they are of the place – often the wooded fringe-lands and agricultural edge-lands – the photographs are more about the fact that these are forgotten places.' He develops this idea by explaining that his series of abstract volcanic images he shot in Lanzarote are more about retelling the story of an event that has already happened, 'overlaying it, empowering it and bringing it back to life through vision.'

If the devil's advocate were addressing the court, he might sum up by saying that the intensity of Wright's artistic approach somehow undermines the fact that what we are looking at is, after all, a set of two-dimensional photographs. 'You're

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absolutely right. Clearly they are. Just as paintings are paintings and sculptures are sculptures. But to me art can be anything: it isn't about the object. It is about the practice and the approach and only to a lesser degree the outcome. So on that basis any practice that allows you to be creative and express an emotion is art. In 100 years' time, there may be other ways of being creative that we haven't even thought about and it is absolutely my view that there is no reason why these processes won't be art, too.'

Despite his ideas being highly evolved, Wright says that his thoughts on the matter aren't cut and dried. Ever self-critical, he is deeply aware of the necessity of having an open mind and is receptive to the idea that the way he looks on the world is developing and undergoing constant change. 'If I look back through the past five years of my photography, from my perspective, it's changed fundamentally and I think that this is a byproduct of me wanting to continually learn and understand and explore as much about myself as it is about the craft of photography.'

For the past 20 years Wright has worked in a very senior technology strategy role in a financial services company. 'In a sense, it's a very logical, highly pressurised job and it is in an

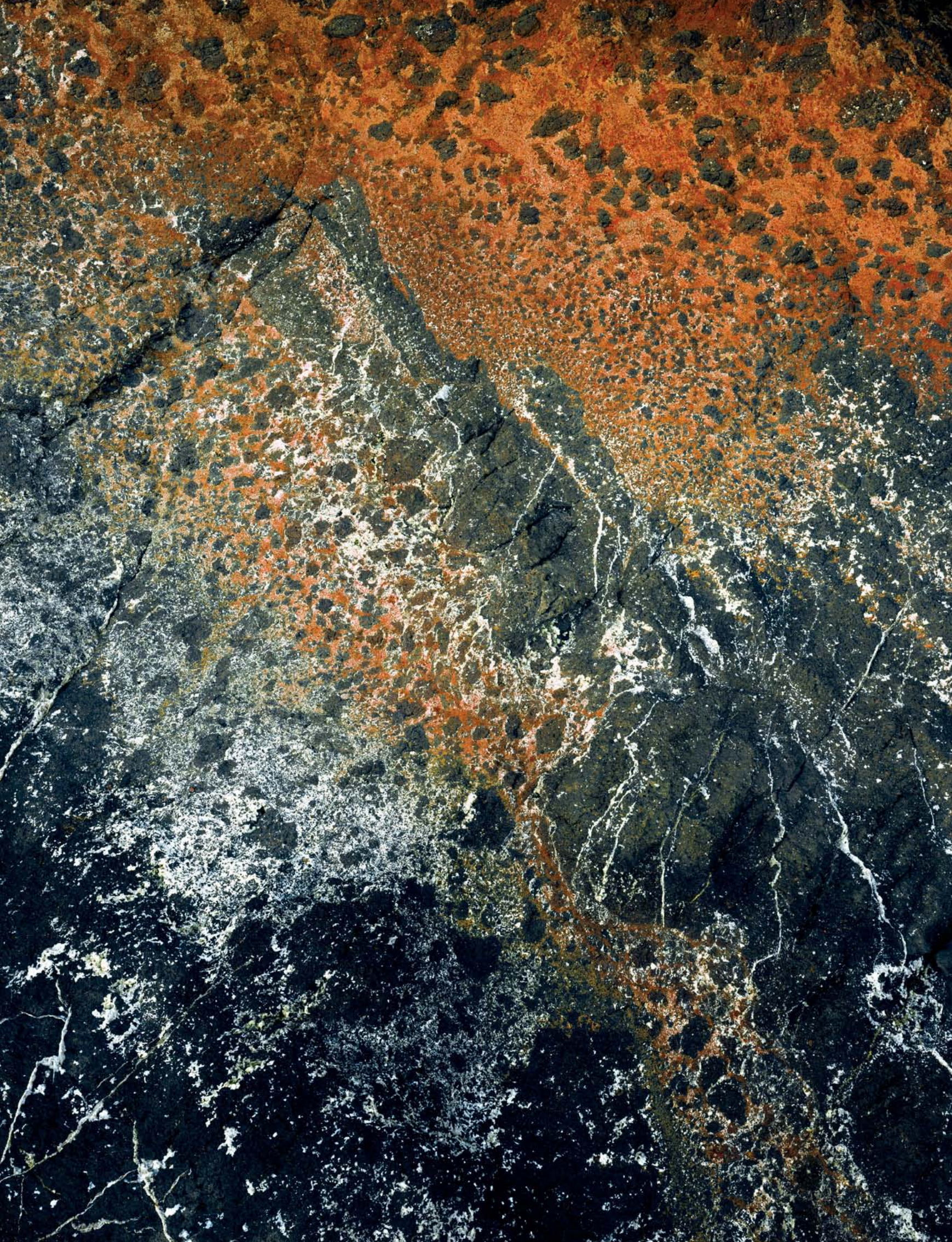
office. You could say it's in direct opposition to my photographic work, which is more about freedom and expression.'

While it's tempting to think that the formality of Wright's orthodox career and the discipline of his current day job are inconsistent with his life as an artist, to him it is a naturally occurring phenomenon. 'The fact that I can completely divorce one from the other is helpful for me in that they are complementary. I'm not being nostalgic or trying to relive my bygone youth. But there are times when getting back into the countryside, having that relationship away from the pressures of the day job, is enjoyable. My background technology experience has enabled me to accelerate the craft aspect of the photography.'

For Wright, one of the benefits of this background is that the scientific and technological understanding of how cameras and the photographic process work 'is out of the way. I don't need to think about that when I go out to make photographs. And that's really helpful.'

*To see more of Joe Wright's work visit [joewrightphotography.com](http://joewrightphotography.com). His new book 'The Floods' is published in May.*









*With a nod to realism and the picturesque, Pete Bridgwood captures an honest representation of an idyllic springtime scene in one of France's most beautiful regions*

Photography has been part of our lives for almost two centuries now, providing a rich tapestry of conflicting aesthetics to stimulate discussion and opinion in camera circles all over the planet. Before the birth of photography, easel painters would navigate their preferred creative path between the celebrated aesthetics of the beautiful, the sublime and the picturesque. Photography both challenged the realism of landscape painting and offered traditional artists glimpses of how long exposures revealed the passage of time by blurring reality. The simultaneous threat and inspiration of the photographic process was a huge driver for the impressionist movement, moving away from a literal representation of reality towards a more dreamlike presentation where brushstrokes translated a multisensory experience rather than literal realism. Not to be outdone, landscape photographers subsequently invented pictorialism,

championing soft focus, intentional blurring and creative rendering of colour and tone: a new photographic aesthetic inspired by impressionism.

Several generations later, landscape photography continues to enjoy repeating cycles of fashion. Intentional camera movement, ultra-dense neutral-density filtered long exposures and various methods of creative processing are the latest components of pictorialism circa 2015. Reassuringly, the more traditional easel aesthetics of beauty, the sublime and the picturesque also have an enduring heritage in the landscape fraternity.

Our media savvy, competitive modern technological world tantalises creatives with the addictive possibility of immediate validation. A consummate appetite for the epic wow-factor landscape, the modern sublime, attracts high viewing figures on picture-sharing websites and plays its own part in distorting fashion. It seems

incredible that with such visually rich aesthetic competition, realism and the picturesque remain in a world that craves instant visual gratification.

Recent evolutions in camera design and printing have resulted in an exponential leap for realism, and when such technological advances are placed into the hands of an appropriate photographer, the printed results can be breathtaking. Our audience appreciates visual honesty and they instinctively know whether an image is 'real' or creatively concocted.

This image is a tribute to realism and the picturesque: a chocolate-box image capturing this group of barn buildings in an idyllic garden in the Dordogne. Who could deny the perfect beauty of this scenic epiphany heralding spring?

---

Dordogne, France.  
Canon EOS 1Ds MkII with 17-40mm f/4 L USM lens  
at 17mm, ISO 100, 1/25sec at f/11, Lee 2-stop ND  
grad, polariser, Manfrotto tripod and head





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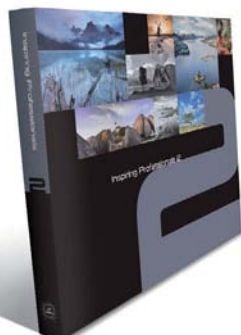
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## Discover the creative potential of filters



LEE Filters are pleased to announce the publication of 'Inspiring Professionals 2', a 174 page hardback book produced in collaboration with nine of the UK's best-known and most highly respected photographers – **Joe Cornish, Mark Denton, Paul Gallagher, John Gravett, Tom Mackie, David Noton, Charlie Waite, Jeremy Walker and David Ward.**



Continuing where the first LEE Filters book left off, 'Inspiring Professionals 2' is beautifully designed and lavishly illustrated with photographs that demonstrate the creative potential of filters – underlining the fact that they remain as relevant as ever in today's digital world.

The book is available from LEE Filters dealers or direct from LEE Filters at a cost of £12.50 plus P&P. For further details call LEE Filters on 01264 366245 or email [sales@leefilters.com](mailto:sales@leefilters.com).



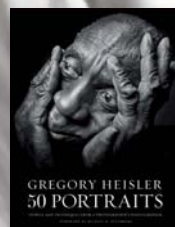
The original 132 page hardback 'Inspiring Professionals' book is still available from LEE Filters dealers or direct from LEE Filters at a cost of £10.00 plus P&P.

Both books are also available as ebooks from the iBooks Store (suitable for Mac and iPad). These multi-touch versions have been specifically designed for the best possible experience on screen.

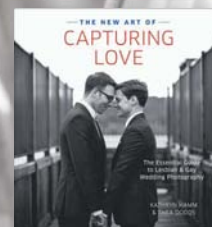


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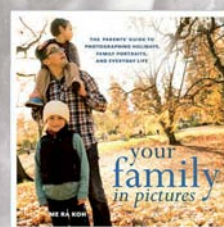
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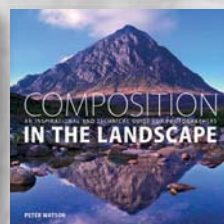
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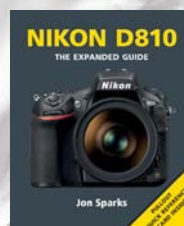
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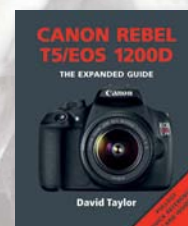
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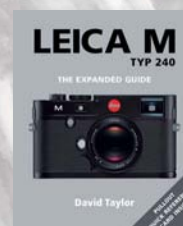
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# LEARNING ZONE

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## IMPROVE

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Time-lapse photography**



### **BRINGING YOUR IMAGES TO LIFE**

Kirk Norbury reveals essential tips for creating time-lapse sequences



# How to shoot digital panoramas

*Panoramic photography used to require specialist film cameras, but these days all you need to do is shoot a sequence of images with your DSLR then 'stitch' them together. Lee Frost explains how it's done and introduces the endless creative options that are possible with this technique*

I've been a big fan of panoramic photography ever since I set eyes on Colin Prior's book, *Highland Wilderness*, back in the early 90s, in which he captured the wild landscapes of Scotland using a 6x17cm film camera. It was as if I had found the missing piece to my own creative jigsaw puzzle, and after months of saving I managed to scrape enough money together to buy my very own Fuji G617.

From that point on I was hooked. Over the proceeding years I tried pretty much every panoramic camera there was, from a Hasselblad Xpan to a handmade 360° 'Lookaround'. I wrote a bestselling book on the art of panoramic photography and travelled the world in search of views and subjects that suited the letterbox format.

That quest continues today, but instead of carrying a cartload of

photographic film and a pack of big, heavy cameras, I use my trusty DSLR – at the moment a Canon EOS 5D MkIII.

The benefit of shooting digital panoramas is that you have virtually endless creative options. You can use any lens in your collection, from super-wide to long telephoto, whereas panoramic film cameras were usually limited to three or four focal lengths. Even better, you can take as many individual frames as you like and cover any field of view up to 360°. If you're really serious you can even shoot more than one row of images and stitch them all together to create massive image files and gigantic prints. Digital panoramic photography is easy, fun and hugely rewarding, however you approach it – you just have to follow a few simple guidelines, which I'll be covering over the following pages.



## Val d'Orcia, Tuscany, Italy.

Fuji GX617 panoramic camera with 90mm lens, ISO 50, exposure not recorded, 0.6 ND hard grad



## Derwentwater, Lake District.

Canon EOS 1DS MkIII with 17-40mm lens, ISO 100, 1sec at f/11, 0.45 ND hard grad



## Singing Sands, Isle of Eigg.

Canon EOS 1DS MkIII with 24-70mm lens, ISO 100, 100sec at f/4, 0.6 ND hard grad

## SETTING UP AND SHOOTING

The key to success when shooting digital panoramas is to be organised and follow a set procedure that becomes second nature. You need to produce a set of images that are easy to stitch together using whichever software you choose, and in order to achieve that you need to consider a number of pointers.

### Lens choice

There's no right or wrong here – it's a case of choosing a lens or focal length that suits a particular scene or subject. I tend to use my 24-70mm lens more than any other, but sometimes I find a 16-35mm is the best choice where I need to cram a lot into each frame or if I'm shooting at close range. Stitching software has come a long way in recent years, so even though ultra-wide focal lengths can create a lot of distortion, it needn't be a problem because the software can correct it. For subjects such as distant mountains or hills I often use a 70-300mm telezoom, too.

### Levelling the camera

A crucial part of creating digital panoramas is making sure your camera is level. There's no point setting up your tripod, sticking a spirit level on the camera's hotshoe and levelling the camera as you would to take a single shot because, chances are, as soon as you pan left



LEVELLING THE CAMERA

or right to take the next shot in the sequence it will fall out of level.

To avoid that you need to make sure the base on which the tripod head sits is level in all directions – either by laboriously adjusting the tripod legs or, more easily, by purchasing a levelling base that sits between the tripod legs and the tripod head. I use a Gitzo levelling base on my Gitzo tripod and it gives me 15° of adjustment using a cup and half ball design, with a bullseye bubble to check for level. The latest model is the GS3121LVL Series 3 and it costs around £215. Manfrotto



LEVELLING THE TRIPOD HEAD

produces a simpler model known as the MN338 Levelling Base (£90). I also have an excellent Acratech levelling base (£140) on my smaller Manfrotto 190 tripod.

Once the platform on which the tripod head sits is level, you can then adjust the head itself to make sure it too is level by placing a spirit level on your camera's hotshoe. When you've done that, it should be possible to rotate the camera through 360° and maintain level, though don't worry if there's a little deviation – the stitching software will sort it anyway.



## Getting the exposure right

For the stitching software to produce a seamless panorama, the exposure for each frame must be consistent. To achieve that, I take an exposure test shot from the most important part of the scene, then set my DSLR to manual mode and use exactly the same exposure for each image in the sequence. In high-contrast conditions this may mean that some parts of the scene are overexposed and others underexposed, but that's just how it is.

## White balance

If you leave your DSLR set to auto white balance (AWB) there's a risk that it will adjust between shots, resulting in inconsistent colours in the images in your sequence. If you're shooting in Raw format, you can batch-process the images in the sequence and apply the same white balance to them all. It's easier and quicker to set your DSLR to daylight white balance before shooting, however. This way you get consistent colour balance in-camera.

## Composition

Subject matter is down to personal preference. I mainly shoot landscapes, but any subject where there's interest across a wide angle of view is suitable. The crucial thing is to make sure there are interesting elements in the composition from start to finish, and features such as lines to carry the viewer's eye through it. We naturally scan panoramic images from left to right, so avoid putting all the 'meat' of

the composition too far to the left of the image, otherwise the viewer will have nothing to hold their interest once they get beyond it. Use the good old rule of thirds as a guide, and position your focal point or main subject two-thirds from the left.

In terms of the angle of coverage, I like the 1:3 ratio as I got used to it while working with panoramic film cameras and it's also a nice format for landscape – obviously panoramic, but not too long and skinny! If you're going to print your panoramas you need to consider this, because long, thin prints are a pain to mount and frame. Of course, you can always crop a panorama if you decide it's too wide.

## Portrait or landscape format?

The usual approach when shooting images for a stitched panorama is to set your camera up in portrait format, to maximise the pixel depth of the final image. Because the resolution of the latest DSLRs is now so high, even if you shoot in landscape format you'll still end up with a massive file once the images are stitched together.

## Overlap the images

When you start shooting the images for your stitched panorama, make sure there's an overlap of 30-40% between each one. You don't have to be too precise, but overlapping makes it easier for the stitching software to merge the images without complicated elements in the scene causing problems.

## PRO TIPS

» You don't have to mount your camera on a tripod when shooting images for a stitched panorama – I often handhold. It takes practice to keep the camera level, but it is achievable and makes shooting 'pans' much quicker.

» Set your zoom a little wider than you need it to allow room for cropping the final stitched image without losing important subject matter.

» It's a good idea to overshoot the panorama at the beginning and end then crop out the excess once the images have been stitched together.

» You can use neutral density (ND) grad filters to tone down the sky when shooting panoramas. Avoid using polarising filters, however, as the angle of coverage usually results in uneven polarisation of the sky, which looks odd.

» To ensure you know which images are in the same sequence for a panorama, photograph your hand at the start and finish – fingers pointing right at the start and left at the end. The images between the hand shots all go together!

» I tend to use manual focus when shooting panoramas, so there's no danger of the focus shifting or hunting as I move the camera between frames.

» Unless you need to stop down further to increase depth of field, set your lens to a mid-range aperture such as f/8 or f/11 for optimum image quality.

Kirkjufell, Grundafjordur, Iceland. This is a stitch of six vertical images that were shot very wide at 16mm. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 16-35mm f/4 IS lens, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/11, 0.6 ND hard grad





# STITCHING THE IMAGES

Once you've shot your images, the next stage is to stitch them together using suitable software.

Fortunately, stitching software is now better than ever, making the task of creating perfect pans with minimum fuss both quick and easy. All you need to do is put the individual images that will make up the final panorama into a folder on your computer, open your stitching software, browse your folders to find the right one, click 'OK', and sit back while the software does all the hard work. A minute or so later, a perfect panorama appears on your screen.

I use Photomerge in the latest version of Adobe Photoshop CC to do all my stitching, and I have to say, it's fantastic. Photomerge in versions of Photoshop before CS3 were pretty poor, but from CS3 on they just got better and better. There are other stitching apps available (see panel, opposite), but I'm happy to stick with Photoshop.

If you follow the steps outlined earlier and produce a good set of images with consistent exposure and white balance that are well overlapped, the stitching software should have no problems creating a seamless panorama by selecting parts from each image

and blending them. Moving elements such as waves, drifting clouds, people and traffic can cause alignment problems, but the latest software tends to overcome them. At worst you may have to use the clone stamp tool to remove unwanted or repeated elements, or to soften visible joins between images.

In Photoshop Photomerge there are also various layout options, such as Auto, Perspective, Cylindrical and Spherical. Auto usually does a good job, but if I'm using a wideangle focal length to shoot the images, which introduces more distortion, I find that Cylindrical works better.



## Parallax error and the nodal point

The main technical issue you have to face when shooting panoramas is parallax error. This is caused when you rotate the camera between frames and the alignment of elements in the scene changes slightly so that the frames don't line up perfectly when you stitch them together. The wider the focal length of the lens you use to shoot the individual frames, and the closer the elements in the scene are, the more obvious parallax error is.

I rarely find parallax error to be an issue when shooting landscapes because the subject matter is usually quite a distance from the camera. But for architecture, interiors and urban views shot with a wideangle lens, it can be an issue.

If you want to be more precise and avoid parallax error altogether, you need to set up

the camera so that it rotates around its optical centre – often (incorrectly) referred to as the nodal point. The easiest way to do this is by investing in a flat adjustable bracket – usually called a nodal point bracket or nodal slide – which allows you to adjust the position of the camera in relation to the tripod head so that instead of rotating the camera from its baseplate, which is where it's normally attached to the tripod head, you can find where its optical centre is and rotate it around that point, so parallax error is eliminated. You can pick them up on Amazon these days for around £20 – just search for 'nodal slide'.

To find the optical centre of a lens you need to take a series of test shots. There are lots of online tutorials that explain how to do this – try the Digital Grin website for tips: [dgrin.smugmug.com/gallery/2114189](http://dgrin.smugmug.com/gallery/2114189).



USING A NODAL SLIDE





*opposite* Glen Sligachan, Isle of Skye.  
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70-200mm lens,  
ISO 100, 1/8sec at f/16, 0.6ND hard grad

*top* Taransay, Outer Hebrides.  
Canon EOS 1DS MkIII with 24-70mm lens,  
ISO 100, 2sec at f/11, 0.45 ND hard grad

*above* St Mary's Island, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear.  
Canon EOS 1DS MkIII with 24-70mm lens, ISO 100,  
0.4sec at f/16, 0.6 ND hard grad

## STITCHING SOFTWARE

Here's a selection of some of the most popular stitching applications...

### Adobe Photoshop

If you're using a version of Photoshop, Elements or Lightroom, you can stitch images together using the Photomerge function – in Photoshop go to *File > Automate > Photomerge* and follow the instructions. It's quick, easy and very effective. Prior to Photoshop CS3 it wasn't so good, but from CS3 on it does an excellent job. Available for Windows and Mac.

**Cost:** free as part of Photoshop and Lightroom.  
[adobe.com](http://adobe.com)

### PTGui (Panoramic Tools Graphical User Interface)

Available for both Mac and PC, PTGui is far more capable than Photomerge, allowing you to stitch multiple layers of images, create 360° cylindrical pans, 360x180° Spherical pans, HDR pans, Gigapixel pans from hundreds of source images and more.

**Cost:** €79 for PTGui, €149 for PTGui Pro.  
[ptgui.com](http://ptgui.com)

### PanaVue Image Assembler 3

Similar to PTGui in that it offers automatic and manual stitching, corrects lens distortion and misalignment, can handle multi-layer stitches and one-million x one-million pixel stitches, offers automatic cropping, single-step 360° image wrapping, stitches handheld sequences

and creates dramatic vertical pans. Available for Windows only.

**Cost:** free for Enterprise Edition.  
[panavue.com](http://panavue.com)

### Panoweaver 8

Panoweaver 8 is a good choice if you want to create cylindrical or spherical pans and use them for VR viewing using HTML 5, Flash VR, QTVR and other platforms. You can also use it to create Little Planet images, stitch multiple rows, handle images shot with full-frame fisheye lenses, create HDR pans and much more. Available for Windows and Mac.

**Cost:** \$299.99 Pro Edition.  
[easypano.com](http://easypano.com)

### Arcsoft Panorama Maker 6

A relatively inexpensive package and easy to use. It offers five stitching modes – Auto, Horizontal, 360°, Tile and Vertical – just select the one you want then choose your images. You can create panoramas from both stills and video, create 360° virtual reality movies, 3D panoramas, export the pans in a range of image formats, adjust colour balance, exposure and dynamic lighting. Available for Windows and Mac.

**Cost:** \$79.99.  
[arcsoft.com](http://arcsoft.com)

## PRO TIPS

» When you process the images for a panorama you can save them as TIFF files or JPEGs. The former means the final image will be massive. I often use JPEGs at maximum quality to reduce the file size and speed up stitching – image quality is still superb.

» If you don't intend making massive panoramic prints, you can always create 'croparamas' by cropping a single wideangle shot horizontally or vertically. By interpolating the file (I use Bicubic Smoother in Photoshop – *Image > Image Size*) you should still be able to make 30in+ wide prints.

» The 'sweep panorama' mode on many digital compacts and smartphones is great for creating impressive panoramas, though it takes a little practice to keep the camera level as you pan it.

» If you use a smartphone such as the Apple iPhone 6, check out some of the panoramic apps available, such as Panorama, Panomax, Panorama 360 camera, DMD Panorama and Pano.

» The more images there are in your panorama, the bigger the file and the longer it will take to create. Make sure your computer has at least 4GB of Ram, preferably more.



# ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

**A**lthough most digital panoramas are created from a sequence of images captured on a horizontal plane, it's also possible to shoot 'vertoramas' by shooting overlapping images from top to bottom rather than left to right (or bottom to top instead of right to left!). This is a handy technique to use if you're shooting interiors and your widest lens isn't wide enough, or landscapes where you can't get far enough back to include the whole scene. Vertical pans with a ratio of 3:1 or more can also look very dramatic, simply because we're not used seeing images composed that way – they take a vertical slice out of a scene.

If you have a tilt/shift lens, another option is to shoot semi-panoramas without actually moving the camera – all you do is shift the lens to the left, take a shot, shift it to the right, take a second shot, then stitch the two frames. This approach works well with the latest high-resolution DSLRs such as the Nikon D800, 800e and 810 or the soon to be launched Canon EOS 5Ds, as you can stitch the two frames then crop the final image to produce a more elongated panorama if required – and still have the file size to make huge prints!

*right* Val d'Orcia, Tuscany, Italy.  
Canon EOS 1DS MkIII with 70-200mm  
lens, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/16

*opposite* Glen Etive, Highland.  
Canon EOS 1DS MkIII with 17-40mm  
lens, ISO 100, 1/2sec at f/16



## Planet panoramas

Want to try something a little wackier? Then how about creating a planet panorama? All you need to do is take a 360° horizontal panorama (shot using the normal stitching technique explained earlier) and make a few quick changes to it in Photoshop – the result is a circular image that looks like you levitated above the Earth's surface and captured it with a fisheye lens!

The horizon must be central and the panorama level so the horizon meets when the image is 'wrapped'. The scene should also be relatively plain in the top and bottom 25%, with all the main interest towards the centre.

Once you've stitched the images in your 360° pan, in Photoshop go to *Image > Image Size* and uncheck *Constrain Proportions*. Next, set the height of the image to the same size as the width to distort it, then go to *Image > Image Rotation* and rotate 180°. Next, go to *Filter > Distort > Polar Coordinates* and in the dialogue box choose *Rectangular to Polar*. This will transform the image and create the striking planet effect you're after. Rotate the planet until you're happy with how it looks using *Image > Image Rotation > Arbitrary*. If the join between the two ends of the 360° pan isn't perfect, clean it up with the clone stamp tool, then adjust colour and contrast.

*left: top and bottom* Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear. The original 360° panorama and the planet panorama created from it.  
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm lens, ISO 100, 1/80sec at f/9






## 10 STEPS TO SUCCESS

So we've covered everything you need to know to create stunning stitched panoramas. Now it's just a case of grabbing your camera and tripod, heading into the field and putting that advice into practice. Before you go, here's a quick re-cap of the most important things to remember.

- 1** Mount your camera on a tripod in portrait or landscape format and make sure the tripod head is level so that when you rotate the camera between shots it remains level. Do a practice scan across the scene to decide where it begins and ends.
- 2** Take a test shot from an average part of the scene – not the lightest or the darkest – check the image and histogram and if all looks OK, set that exposure with your camera in manual mode so you use exactly the same exposure for each frame.
- 3** Swing the camera to the far left of the view you want to capture, focus manually and take a shot of your left hand with your fingers pointing to the right. This denotes where the sequence begins so you don't get confused later.
- 4** Take the first shot in the sequence, move the camera slightly to the right and make your second exposure. Repeat this until you reach the other end of the scene, making sure you overlap each image by 30-40% to enable easy stitching.
- 5** Take a photograph of your right hand with your fingers pointing to the left to denote the end of the sequence. When you download the files to your computer you'll know that all the images between the two hand shots are in the same sequence.
- 6** Download the images to a computer. If you shoot in Raw, batch-process the Raw files from the sequences so they all receive the same adjustments and corrections, otherwise inconsistencies will creep in. Place those images in a folder.
- 7** Open Photoshop and go to *File > Automate > Photomerge*. Select the layout style you want to use. Auto usually works fine. I also use Cylindrical and Perspective. Next, click on the 'Use' tab, select 'Folders' then click on 'Browse'.
- 8** Click on the folder containing the images you want to stitch and they will appear in the Photomerge dialogue box. Click 'OK' and let Photomerge perform its magic. This can take a few minutes, so put the kettle on and make yourself a cuppa!
- 9** By the time you're back at your computer the stitch should be complete. You may need to crop the edges to tidy it up. This is common if you don't use a nodal point bracket to eliminate parallax error, but nothing to worry about.
- 10** After saving the stitch and flattening the layers – *Layer > Flatten Image* – make any further adjustments until you're happy with the overall look of the image, and remove any distracting elements with the clone stamp tool. Job done!

**TAKE PART!** Enter our 'panoramic landscapes' competition – turn to page 111 for details





Sunset on the Ayrshire coast, Scotland. The changing colours of sunrise and sunset can be captured to powerful effect using the time-lapse technique.

QUICK GUIDE TO...

# Time-lapse photography



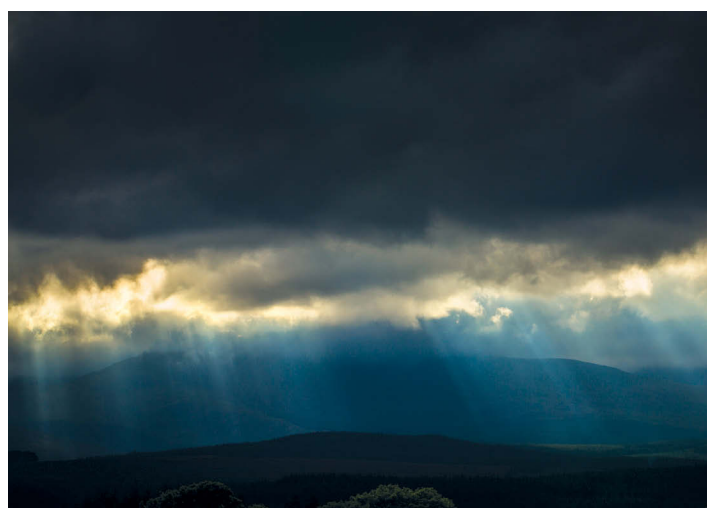
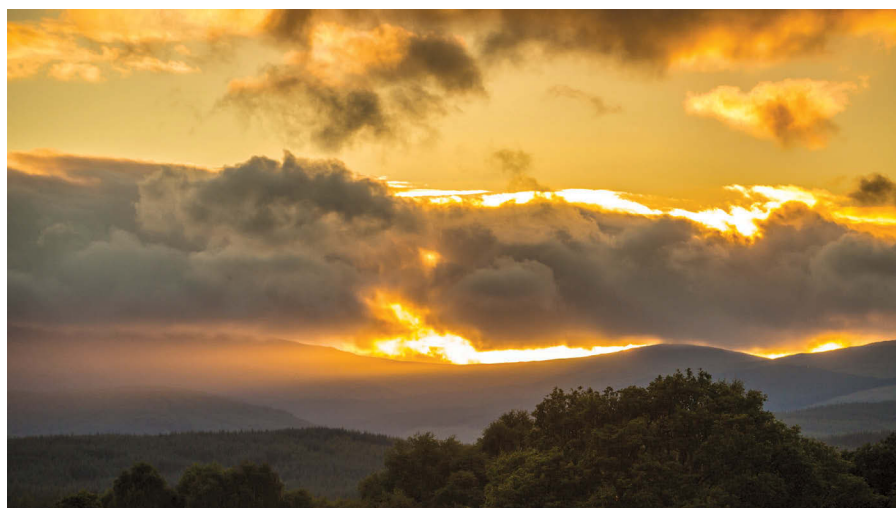
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lapse video

Discover how to create memorable time-lapses that bring the natural world to life. **Kirk Norbury** shows you how to get started and shares some editing tips

**T**ime-lapse photography is the art of taking single images and combining them to create a video. It is very effective for showing movement within the landscape, and can be used to reveal how a scene can change dramatically over time – from the motion of clouds across the sky to changes in the weather and the seasons. I find that time-lapse photography can tell a story about the landscapes around us that a single image may not be able to convey.

## GET THE KIT

- » Any camera will do, as long as it can be used in manual mode.
- » The choice of lens really depends on what you're shooting. I tend to work with focal lengths from 14mm to 200mm.
- » You need a sturdy tripod that isn't going to move.
- » An intervalometer is crucial, as it enables your camera to take shots continually without you touching it.







To add a three-dimensional feel to my time-lapses, I swap my tripod for motorised sliders, allowing me to pan round a scene.

## SETTING UP THE SHOT

- 1 Place your camera on to a sturdy tripod and lock everything down.
- 2 Attach an intervalometer to your camera (some cameras have an one built in) and dial in your interval settings. The time delay between shots can be as long or short as you want, and can be altered to suit the scene/ subject matter and the lens you're using. I tend to set the interval to between one and five seconds.
- 3 Ensure your camera is in manual mode, as you don't want it to judge the exposure for you – even in aperture priority mode there's a high risk there will be flickering from varying exposures in the resulting video.
- 4 Check your histogram to ensure there are no blown highlights, and manually focus the lens to ensure the image is sharp.
- 5 If you're using a DSLR you need to prevent any stray light from leaking through, as this could slightly change the exposure. Shield the viewfinder with an eyepiece cover, if your camera has one, or simply cover it with a cloth, if it's not too windy.

- 6 Take a test shot to check your composition, exposure and focus.
- 7 Think about how many shots you want to take. In the UK the standard exposure rate for film (motion pictures) is 25 frames per second, so to get 10 seconds of footage you will need to take 250 images. I tend to take around 400-600 shots to allow more room for editing.
- 8 Once you're happy, click 'start' on the intervalometer and leave the camera well alone while it takes the shots.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- » Shoot in Raw. This will produce images with a larger dynamic range and give you more possibilities when editing.
- » When using your camera in manual mode, set your white balance manually as well.
- » Your batteries will drain quickly, so always carry spares. I recommend using a battery grip on your camera so that you can use two batteries at the same time to shoot longer sequences.
- » You want the footage to look smooth, and a bit of motion blur works well in time-lapse. Try a shutter speed of around 1/50sec – this is the standard for a cinematic look.
- » Make sure your camera's sensor is clean and, just before you start shooting, check the lens element for rain droplets.
- » Your memory cards need to be large and fast. You're going to be taking a lot of images, and your camera's buffer needs to quickly process them. I recommend cards with at least 16GB capacity with a write speed of 30MB/s.

## EDITING YOUR TIME-LAPSE

### TECHNIQUE 1

- » Import your sequence of images into your favourite editing software; I find Adobe Lightroom to be the best.
- » Edit one of the images and then copy all the settings on to the other images.
- » Export the images as JPEGs.
- » Open QuickTime 7 Pro. Click 'Open Image Sequence' and select the first image from the series.
- » Set your desired frame rate. A preview of the video will be made and you can then click 'Export'.

### TECHNIQUE 2

- » Adobe After Effects offers another great way of editing a time-lapse.
- » Go to 'File > Import Files > Multiple Files' and select the first unedited Raw image, making sure 'Image Sequence' option is selected.
- » When you click 'Open', a dialog box will appear, allowing you to edit the file.
- » Next, drag the file as a new composition and then you can render the resulting file into a video.



Click here for Time Lapse Adobe CC



To see Kirk's time-lapse landscapes, and for more tips on how to create your own, go to [kirknorburyphoto.com](http://kirknorburyphoto.com). His website includes a video tutorial on how to create a time-lapse sequence using Adobe After Effects.



# An eye in the sky

*During an early morning landscape shoot at one of his favourite North Downs beauty spots, Craig Denford tries to stay positive when a drone arrives on the scene...*



I've photographed at Newlands Corner in Surrey many times, it's one of my favourite locations, but I'd never been lucky enough to witness a cloud inversion there. It had been a long-held dream to see and photograph one.

On this particular morning I had intended to visit nearby Box Hill but I never quite made it. As I crested the hill at Newlands, an amazing scene opened out in front of me. Box Hill would have to wait for another day.

A ribbon of cloud obscured the early rising sun, but as the colour gradually began to filter through some lovely pastel tones started to develop. This was it; finally I could capture the kind of images I'd hoped for. I carefully

composed the scene and began photographing. This is incredible, I thought to myself. Perfect mornings like this don't come along very often. I even took a snap on my mobile phone to send to my wife – I do these things when I'm excited, and I'm sure she loves waking up to a nice landscape photo.

Then disaster struck. It began with a faint and distant humming sound. The noise quickly became stronger and higher pitched. Then, there it was; a drone, and it was hovering around right in the middle of my shot. I was powerless to do anything about it (I figure you're not allowed to shoot at these things), and knew that from this point on, cloning during post-processing was

going to be the only option for me to eradicate this very modern-day nuisance.

I tried to look on the bright side. Minutes earlier I'd answered the call of nature; that morning cup of tea is always a killer. Imagine if the drone had flown overhead at that point. Could I get arrested, or would I simply end up on YouTube? I couldn't quite decide which would be worse for my reputation. Although I worry about the increasing possibility of us all living an Orwellian future, with the skies filled with prying eyes watching our every move, I know that nature is stronger than and oblivious to any fancy technology, and when you've got to go, you've got to go.





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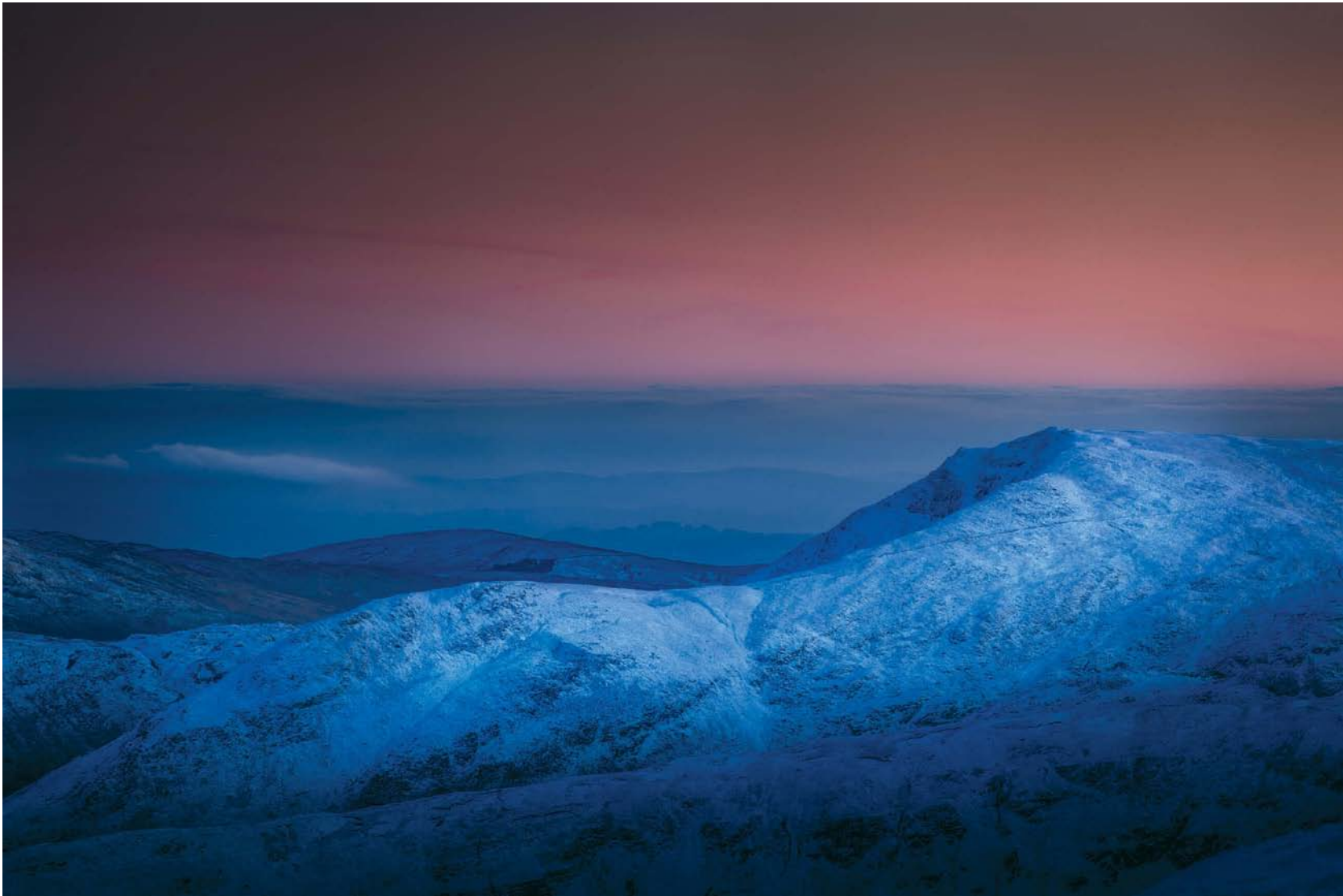
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## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# Shaun Walby

*British landscape photographer Shaun Walby gets his inspiration from simply being among the natural colours of the great outdoors. Nick Smith talks to him about his work*

**NICK SMITH Can you define what it is that makes a Shaun Walby photograph?**

**SHAUN WALBY** What I try to do is capture atmosphere within an image. There are nice places that you can go to photograph, but for me there has to be more to it than that. With landscape you tend to talk about light, but there's also fog, snow and all kinds of other variables to consider.

**NS What's your work-life balance like?**

**SW** Well, I have a full-time day job as a physiotherapist, which comes with its own pressures. So getting out to do photography is essentially a weekend job

for me. I also have a family. But you can work around these things with some careful planning. The trouble is always the weather, though. You can't really plan for that.

**NS But that's the same for everyone, isn't it?**

**SW** Yes, but if you're a landscape photographer you can't plan a month ahead. The best scenario is to be able to move at three days' notice. Having said that, I've found that I have got some of my best work when I've not been able to plan for ideal conditions. Adverse conditions can sometimes help when it comes to outdoor photography.

**NS You tend to concentrate on British subjects; is there a reason for that?**

**SW** I am first and foremost a landscape photographer. The reason I have more images of Britain is purely because that's where I spend most time. Having said that, I do consider British landscapes to be some of the most varied and stunning on the planet, and I love our islands.

**NS You seem to be deeply concerned with colour, and yet you do monochrome photography too...**

**SW** My first love is black & white, and so I've always had an interest in that. When you're doing alpine photography, a lot of what you are shooting is blue and white



and so it is easy to work in monochrome. You definitely tune into a different frequency when you work in black & white: things are stripped bare and you work with texture, contrast and form. It's different to colour, where you have to be very careful because humans won't be fooled by manipulated colours. In monochrome you have a lot more leeway. But I'm happy to work in both.

**NS But you do find extraordinary colours in your landscapes?**

**SW** I do much of my work at dawn and sunset, when you will find good colours. But colours are very subjective, which makes it a difficult area to work in. You must interpret the colours yourself and treat them in your own way and to suit yourself. When colour is done well it's fantastic, but it's more complex than black & white.

**NS How much are you concerned with realism?**

**SW** Of course, when you start off you tend to pull things around too much in post-processing. You look back a few months later, have a laugh at yourself, and press delete. Currently, I'm very interested in the monochrome-colour interface, using a very cold palette, and that seems to work very well for winter. At the end of the day I think you have to decide whether you're going to work on the colour on your computer, or go out and capture the colours when they're at their best.

**NS What about subject matter. What inspires you?**

**SW** Well, I'm a climber and a hiker so I've always immersed myself in the outdoors. I started using a camera just to record what I was doing and where I'd been.

## SHAUN'S TOP TIPS

» **One thing I never go on a shoot without is....** a massive sense of optimism. If you love what you do, it comes with the dawning of a new day.

» **My one piece of advice would be to...** learn to love walking and hiking. Getting to the place to take your shots should never be a chore.

» **Something I try to avoid is...** being influenced too much by other photographers' work. I try hard to find my own point of view.

The great thing about climbing in the mountains is that you tend to get up very early in the morning, pre-dawn, and go out in the dark with a headtorch on as the sun comes up. So everything, on that front at least, was already in place to make it easier for me to become an outdoor photographer.



## SHAUN'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

To see more of Shaun's work visit [shaunwalbyphotography.com](http://shaunwalbyphotography.com)

**2002-2006** Carried a camera to record my climbing adventures in the Alps.

**2006-2009** Spent time learning how to take photographs rather than simply recording events.

**2009-2012** Swapped my climbing gear for photographic gear.

**2012-2013** Various successes in photography competitions.

**2014** Category winner/finalist in Outdoor Photographer of the Year 2014.



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Thorp Perrow Arboretum, North Yorkshire, by Janet Burdon

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**3/5 A walk of up to about two miles**, over quite easy terrain.



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**5/5 The most difficult access.** Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

# LOCATIONS GUIDE

## 42 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 Cwm Idwal James Osmond
- 2 Chantry Hill John Dominick

## 46 Viewpoints

- 3 Grand Pier Somerset
- 4 Padley Gorge Derbyshire
- 5 Summerleaze beach Cornwall
- 6 Rhossili Bay Swansea
- 7 Hawes North Yorkshire
- 8 Grindslow Knoll Derbyshire
- 9 Rumbling Bridge Clackmannanshire
- 10 Thorp Perrow Arboretum North Yorkshire



Map plottings are approximate



# Cwm Idwal, Gwynedd

*Having sought out a promising spot from which to photograph the beautiful ice-sculpted Cwm Idwal, James Osmond returns a few years later when conditions are optimal*

Pen Yr Ole Wen reflected in Llyn Idwal outfall stream. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm lens at 22mm, ISO 100, 0.3 and 0.6sec at f/13, polariser, cable release, tripod; two exposures merged

Cwm Idwal is one of Britain's most popular natural wonders. This spectacular hanging valley is a classic example of how glacial processes have shaped the topography of Snowdonia. Being relatively easy to access from the nearby Idwal Cottage car park, it attracts a fair few visitors, but don't let this put you off. Though it's nice to have secret places all to yourself sometimes, I am always pleased to see such a diverse range of ages and abilities enjoying this dramatic mountain landscape.

A short climb from the car park on a superbly maintained path delivers you to the mouth of the valley at the northern end of Llyn Idwal. The path continues right around the lake beneath the soaring slopes of the Glyderau range, which encircles the valley in an amphitheatre of mountain drama. The whole circuit can be completed in an hour, with several photo opportunities all the way round. At the southern end of the lake, a path spurs off towards the Devil's Kitchen, a steep but well-trodden climb to the summits of Glyder Fawr and then Glyder Fach. Venturing even a short way up this path rewards you with commanding views over the whole valley towards the

Carneddau range beyond. It was my plan to make the journey all the way to the top later in the day, to witness sunset from Glyder Fawr, but having woken up to a glorious sunny morning at the Idwal Cottage youth hostel, I decided to pop out for a quick pre-breakfast shoot.

I knew straight away where to go. The outfall stream draining Llyn Idwal meanders slowly through several channels across an area of flat, marshy land before reaching the edge of the hanging valley and tumbling down a series of waterfalls into the main valley below. On a previous visit I had tried a shot in this area looking north towards Pen Yr Ole Wen, the imposing mountain at the head of the Carneddau range. That was on a winter's afternoon, however, and the light was coming almost directly over my shoulder. The problem with the light coming from this angle was that it hit the mountain head on, illuminating its entire southern side so that I couldn't see any shadows. As a result, it looked like a flat cardboard cut-out. The composition had been promising, though, so I'd consigned the shot to my 'work in progress' folder and vowed to try again on a sunny morning. Four years later, that morning came.

On reaching the stream, I was pleased to see that the water's surface was fairly undisturbed by the light breeze, and I set about trying to find a composition that included a little bit of the mountain's reflection. Pen Yr Ole Wen is a distinctive triangular shape from this viewpoint, and I wanted to echo this in my foreground composition, so I spent a while hopping from island to island between the channels of the stream, trying to balance foreground shapes with the mountain and its reflection. The perfect spot required me to have two tripod legs in the stream and the other jammed deep into the soft, marshy land on one of the mini islands. The morning sun was perfect, lighting only one side of the mountain and leaving the other side in shadow – thus picking out its three-dimensional form. Also, it hadn't yet risen above the mountains to the east of where I was standing, so the entire foreground was in shade. This was ideal because the tonal contrast between the land and the water emphasises the shape of the stream, while any splashes of direct light would have distracted from this graphic simplicity. The final touch was to use a polariser, half polarised, to pick out a bit of blue in the wispy sky.

*On reaching the stream, I was pleased to see that the water's surface was fairly undisturbed by the light breeze, and I set about trying to find a composition*

10 miles from Bangor | 65 miles from Chester | ACCESS RATING     

## PLANNING YOUR TRIP

**How to get there** Heading west, take the A5 towards Bangor all the way into Snowdonia and park by the youth hostel at Idwal Cottage. This is a mile past the distinctive mountain Tryfan on your left, at the end of the large lake on your right. Follow the well-maintained path past the visitor centre up to Cwm Idwal.

**What to shoot** Views of the Glyderau range reflected in the lake, waterfalls in the outfall stream and views of Pen Yr Ole Wen to the north.

**Best time of day** Early morning is best

for views of Pen Yr Ole Wen, and there are fewer people about at this time.

**Nearest food/drink** Bryn Tyrch Inn, Capel Curig, Conwy, LL24 0EL, 01690 720223, bryntyrrchinn.co.uk.

**Nearest accommodation** Bryn Tyrch Inn – as above.

**Other times of year** The landscape is transformed in winter conditions, with snow-capped mountains and frozen water around the edges of the lake.

**Ordnance Survey map** OL 17

**Nearby locations** Glyder Fawr (1 mile); Menai Bridge (12 miles).



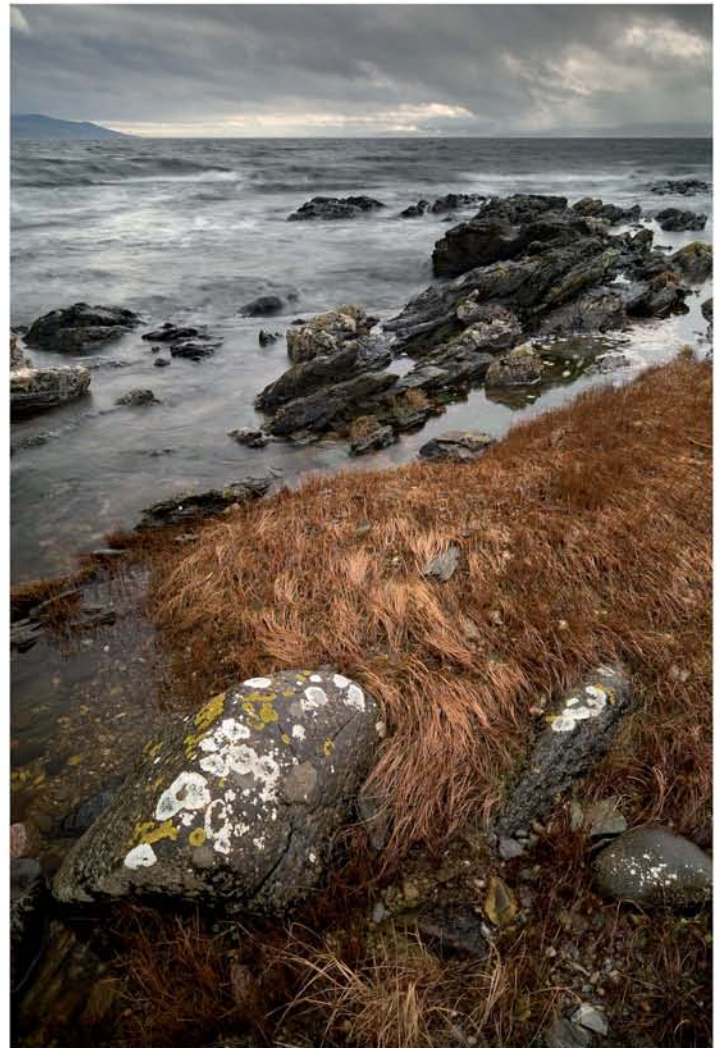






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# Chantry Hill, West Sussex

*In the absence of early morning mist, John Dominick decides to use a telephoto lens to isolate a section of his South Downs vista, creating a dynamic composition*

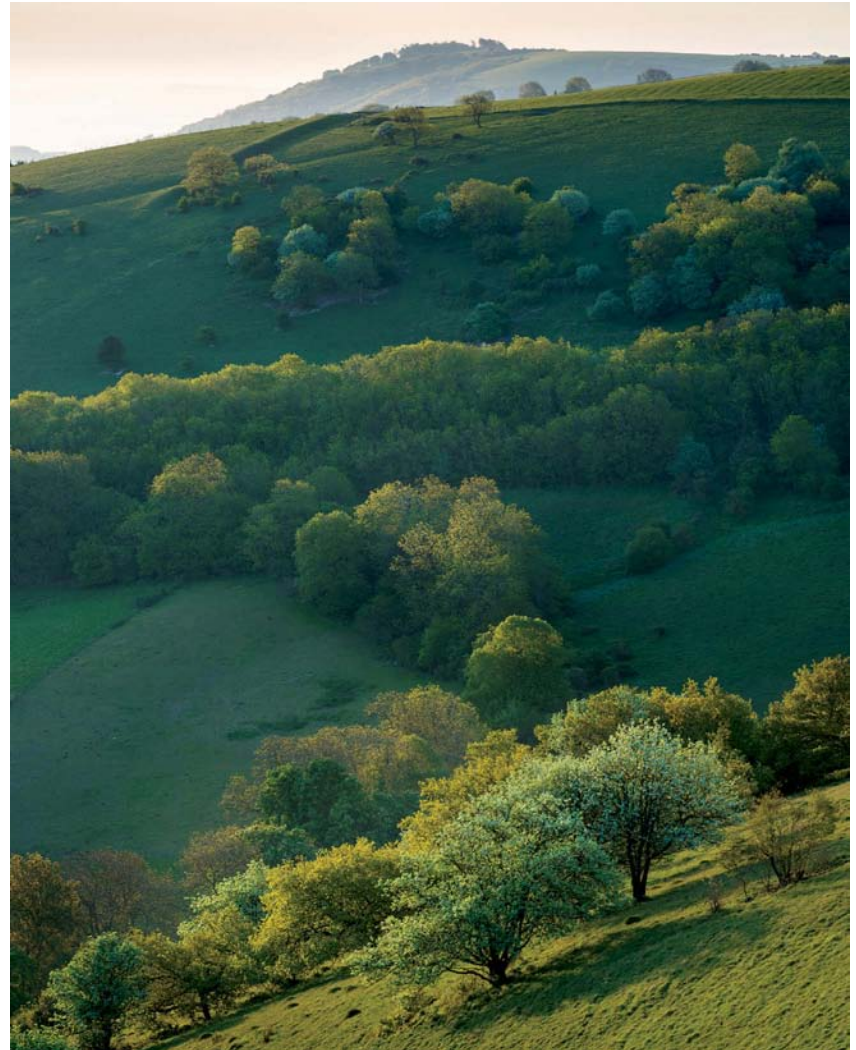
Use of a mid-telephoto focal length has worked well to compress the perspective between the steep hillsides. *Nikon D800 with Nikon 70-200mm f/4 lens at 116mm, ISO 100, 1/20sec at f/11, 0.9 ND grad, cable release, tripod*

It had been a while since I'd visited Chantry Hill, and it was memories of lofty views and the possibility of a misty sunrise that filled my thoughts as I set my alarm for a ridiculously early hour. It seemed only moments later that I was loading my backpack into the car and gazing expectantly at the pink glow on the north-east horizon.

As the car crested the South Downs I was a little disappointed to find only a hint of mist lying in the Arun Valley; the image I had imagined was no longer likely. My spirits were once again lifted upon arrival at the hilltop car park with what seemed like half of Sussex laid before me and the air filled with the dawn chorus.

Knowing there would be little exertion in reaching my viewpoint I had brought a selection of lenses that would offer a host of framing possibilities. I revel in the conundrum of creating compositions, and on this occasion the 70-200mm lens provided the perfect solution to isolating the shapes and patterns running along the side of the hill opposite.

As the sun rose and I became completely engrossed in the play of light and shadow, my mind began the almost subliminal process of arranging the separate elements in the viewfinder. I instinctively tried to bring a flow and rhythm to the final image. The strongly lit diagonal at the bottom leads on to the



suggested Z-shape of the trees and on to the distant diagonal of the hilltop.

Hazy light and a lack of strong sky detail forced me to consider the 5:4 ratio, a decision usually made at the time of capture. The D800 has the facility to set the crop ratio in-camera, but I rarely utilise it, preferring to keep my options open during post-processing. A 0.9 hard

graduated filter was positioned over the sky, even though it is just a slither, in an attempt to preserve detail. I ensured the mirror was locked up and allowed a few seconds between each exposure to minimise vibration. Despite several repeat visits, the perfect misty morning has eluded me, and so I find myself looking forward to more very early rises.

1.5 miles from Storrington | 11 miles from Worthing | **ACCESS RATING**     



## PLANNING YOUR TRIP

**How to get there** From Worthing, take the A24 north and turn left at the Washington roundabout following the A283, signposted Storrington. Just before entering the village, turn left into Chantry Lane and follow the steep road up to the car park.  
**What to shoot** Sweeping views north and south as well as along the South Downs Way.  
**Best time of day** Any time, but dawn in summer.  
**Nearest food/drink** There are several pubs,

restaurants and tearooms in nearby Storrington.  
**Nearest accommodation** The White Horse Hotel, 2 The Square, Storrington, RH20 4DJ, 01903 745760, thewhitehorsestorrington.com.  
**Other times of year** Good for autumn tree colours and frosty winter mornings.  
**Ordnance Survey map** LR 197  
**Nearby locations** Amberley Wildbrooks (5 miles); Hesworth Common (8 miles).





© Andrew Ray

## Grand Pier, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset

The Grand Pier at Weston-super-Mare was reopened in October 2010 following a devastating fire in July 2008. The new, modern pavilion, situated at the far end of the structure, makes a great photographic subject either at sunset or during the hours of twilight when the pier is lit along its entire length.

**How to get there** Exit the M5 at junction 21 and follow the A370 through numerous roundabouts to reach the seafront at Weston-super-Mare (four miles). Turn left near the Ferris wheel, and follow the one-way system round to the right and on to Marine Parade. Continue past the entrance to the pier and take the third turning on the right to park in the Sovereign Centre car park. From here it's only a short walk to the town's pier.

**What to shoot** Different views of the pier, and seascapes.

**Best time of day** Sunset is good, ideally on a relatively high, receding tide.

**Nearest food/drink** Boardwalk Café,

Grand Pier, Marine Parade, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1AL, 01934 620238, grandpier.co.uk.

### Nearest accommodation

The Sandringham Hotel, 1-9 Victoria Square, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1AN, 01934 624891, thesandringham.co.uk.

**Other times of year** The pier faces west, making it a great sunset location at any time of year.

**Ordnance Survey map** LR 182

**Nearby locations** Burnham-on-Sea low lighthouse (11 miles); Clevedon Pier (12 miles).



12 miles from Clevedon | 24 miles from Bristol

ACCESS RATING     

4 miles from Hathersage | 8 miles from Sheffield | ACCESS RATING     

## Padley Gorge, Derbyshire

Situated in the grounds of Longshaw Estate, Padley Gorge is easy to access and offers a variety of photographic opportunities. Burbage Brook runs through the gorge and cascades over gritstone boulders. Its banks are flanked by dense, intriguing woodland and some abandoned millstones.

**How to get there** Take the A6187 east out of Hathersage. Follow the road past Surprise View and Burbage Bridge and then turn right on to the B6521, just before the Fox House pub. After approximately half a mile, park on the right-hand side of the road and take the path down to Padley Gorge.

**What to shoot** Flowing water, rocks, woodland, gnarled trees and views towards Higger Tor.

**Best time of day** Good throughout the day, best after heavy rainfall.

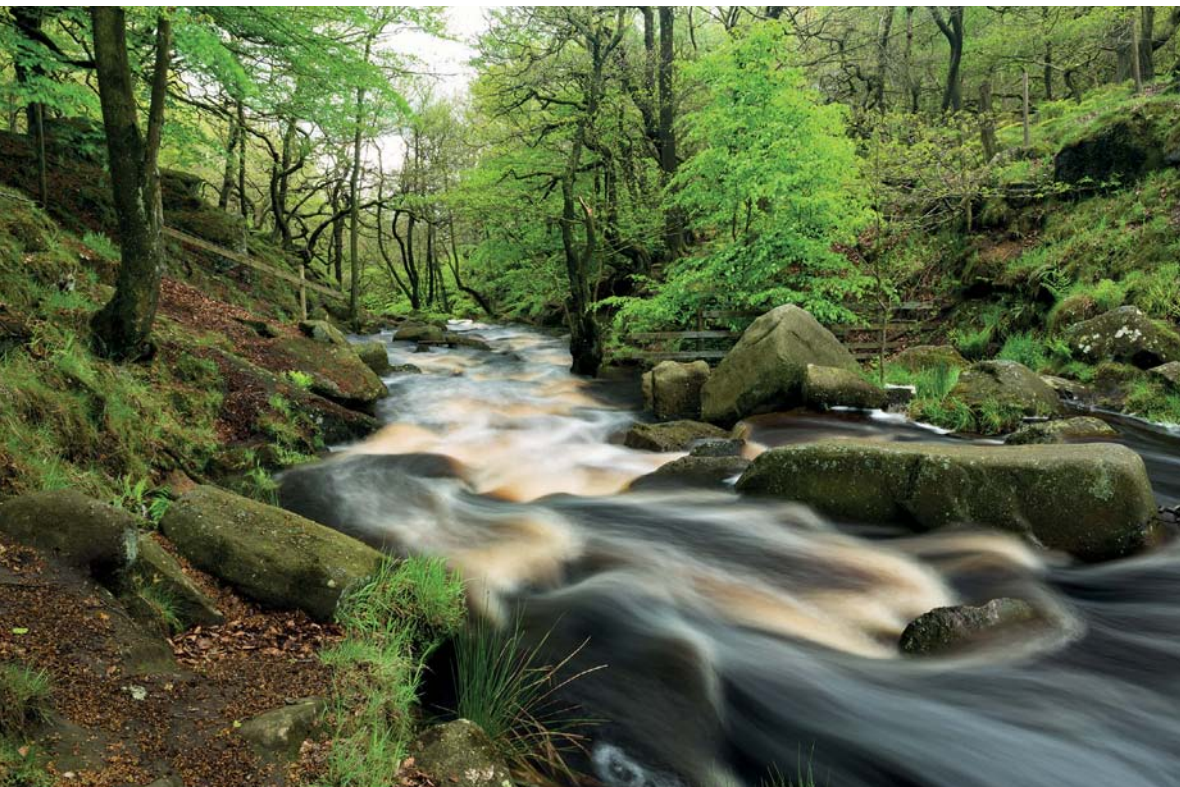
**Nearest food/drink** The Fox House, Hathersage Road, Longshaw, Sheffield, S11 7TY, 01433 630374, vintageinn.co.uk/thefoxhouselongshaw.

**Nearest accommodation** The Fox House – as above.

**Other times of year** The location is well worth a visit in autumn.

**Ordnance Survey map** OL 24

**Nearby locations** Higger Tor (3 miles); Stanage Edge (5 miles).



© Graham Dunn





### Summerleaze beach, Cornwall

This part of Bude in Cornwall offers a variety of viewpoints. The large, sandy beach is good for capturing abstract patterns and reflections after the tide has gone out, and to the north there is a sea pool, which fills up at high tide. To the south of the beach is Efford Down, which offers spectacular views of the breakwater and coastline, and has a photogenic folly, the Pepper Pot.

**How to get there** From the A39 (Atlantic Highway), take the A3073 to Bude. On entering the town, continue straight over the roundabout on Bencoolen Road and take the first right on to Ergue-Gaberic Way. Park in the car park on the left by Bude Canal. Walk along the canal,



keeping it to your left, and enter Summerleaze beach from either side of the canal; Barrel Rock and Bude breakwater are directly ahead.

**What to shoot** Dramatic sunsets; long exposures of breakwater and sea pool.

**Best time of day** Late afternoon/evening.

**Nearest food/drink** Life's a Beach, Summerleaze beach, Bude, EX23 8HN,

01288 355222, lifesabeach.info.

**Nearest accommodation** Atlantic House Hotel, 18 Summerleaze Crescent, Bude, EX23 8HJ, 01288 352451, atlantichousehotel.com.

**Other times of year** Year round.

**Ordnance Survey map** LR 190

**Nearby locations** Crackington Haven (11 miles); Boscastle (15 miles).



15 miles from Launceston | 49 miles from Plymouth | ACCESS RATING

20 miles from Swansea | 60 miles from Cardiff | ACCESS RATING

### Rhossili Bay, Swansea

Rhossili Bay marks the western tip of the Gower Peninsula in south Wales and is rightly regarded as one of the UK's premier beaches. Photo opportunities abound, from the small tidal island of Worm's Head to the wide arc of sandy beach. It is also the resting place of the 19th-century shipwreck Helvetia, whose timbers are exposed at low tide.

**How to get there** From Swansea, take the A4118. After approximately 15 miles, turn right on to the B4247 to Rhossili and park in the National Trust car park. From here, either turn left and walk along the cliff top towards Worm's Head or walk back up the road and follow the steep path down to the beach.

**What to shoot** Telephoto silhouettes

of Worm's Head at sunset; panoramic views of Rhossili Bay beach; the graphic shapes of the Helvetia shipwreck.

**Best time of day** Rhossili Bay faces west, so late afternoon and sunset.

**Nearest food/drink** The Bay Bistro and Coffee House, Rhossili, Gower, SA3 1PL, 01792 390519, thebaybistro.co.uk.

**Nearest accommodation** The Worm's Head Hotel, Rhossili, Gower, SA3 1PP, 01792 390512, thewormshead.co.uk.

**Other times of year** Late summer for heather and gorse on cliff tops; autumn when heather and bracken has turned golden brown; winter for dramatic seas and skies.

**Ordnance Survey map** LR 159

**Nearby locations** Mewslade Bay (5 miles); Three Cliffs Bay (10 miles).







© Lizzie Shepherd

## Hawes, North Yorkshire

This photogenic little hilltop copse, just outside the market town of Hawes, is one of many in Wensleydale but is a favourite for its anthropomorphic form. In late spring, the vibrant greens of the surrounding fields and the newly formed leaves ensure this lovely group of trees, hugging a drystone wall, look their very best. It's very easily accessed and is surrounded by the stunning Wensleydale scenery.

**How to get there** First, find the National Park Centre, just off the A684 on the eastern edge of Hawes. From the car park here, turn right on to the A684, then immediately right again on to Brunt Acres Road. Follow the road for a few hundred

metres then, just after you cross the river, you will see an extended lay-by where you can park on the left by the wall. From here, you can see the copse on top of a hillock to your right.

**What to shoot** In the right conditions, you can opt for a wider composition of the copse, but it really lends itself to a telephoto view.

**Best time of day** Afternoon and evening.

**Nearest food/drink** Wensleydale

Pantry, Market Place, Hawes, DL8 3QX, 01969 667202.

**Nearest accommodation** The White Hart Country Inn, Main Street, Hawes, DL8 3QL, 01969 667214, whitehartcountryinn.co.uk.

**Other times of year** Summer through to autumn is best. Winter would also work.

**Ordnance Survey map** LR 98

**Nearby locations** Hardraw Force (1 mile); Buttertubs Pass (5 miles).



42 miles from Darlington | 55 miles from Leeds | ACCESS RATING

5 miles from Castleton | 29 miles from Manchester | ACCESS RATING

## Grindslow Knoll, Derbyshire

Grindslow Knoll is a real gem in the Peak District, commanding views down the sleepy Vale of Edale and across to the Great Ridge. The viewpoint itself is up in the moorland and has some excellent examples of folded gritstone. There are also plenty of drystone walls on the hill, which make for some great lead-in lines.

**How to get there** From the A6 at Chapel-en-le-Frith, take Sheffield Road towards Castleton. Stay on this road for about four miles, then turn left towards Edale. On arriving at Edale, park at the railway car park and walk up through the village until you find the path to your left. Continue along this path out of the village and across a field until the path splits in two. Take the right-hand path, which takes you to the top of the hill and on to Grindslow Knoll.

**What to shoot** Dramatic scenery down the Vale of Edale to the Great Ridge, and fantastic geological features.

**Best time of day** Early morning as the sun rises over Edale.

**Nearest food and drink** The Old Nag's Head, Edale, S33 7ZD, 01433 670291, the-old-nags-head.co.uk.

**Nearest accommodation** The Old Nag's Head – as above.

**Other times of year** Winter with snow and frost on the landscape works well.

**Ordnance Survey map** OL 1

**Nearby locations** Mam Tor (2 miles); Stanage Edge (11 miles).



© Sean Lewis





## Rumbling Bridge, Clackmannanshire

**R**umbling Bridge is a small village divided by a deep chasm through which the river Devon runs down a series of tumbling waterfalls. The steep-sided gorge is surrounded by rich woodland, making the green mossy depths fairly dark. This, combined with the fast-flowing water, makes it an ideal location for long exposures.

**How to get there** Heading north on the M9, turn off at Stirling, passing through the town and on to the A91 towards Tillicoultry and Dollar. Continue on this road until you reach Yetts O'Muckhart, where you need to turn right on to the A823. Carry on until you reach Rumbling Bridge village.

**What to shoot** The deep gorge and tumbling waterfalls; bluebells and butterflies are found here in spring too.

**Best time of day** Any time is good on overcast days.

**Nearest food/drink** Tormaukin Hotel,

Glendevon, near Dollar, FK14 7JZ, 01259 781252, [tormaukinhotel.co.uk](http://tormaukinhotel.co.uk).

**Nearest accommodation** Tormaukin Hotel – as above.

**Other times of year** Autumn for a mix of autumnal colours and rich, mossy greens on the banks of the river.

**Ordnance Survey map** LR 58

**Nearby locations** Glendevon (2 miles); Loch Leven (7 miles).



© Carlton Doudney



7 miles from Kinross | 18 miles from Stirling | **ACCESS RATING**

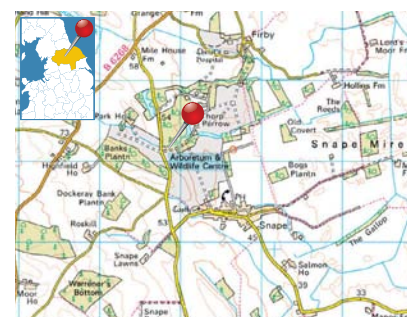
10 miles from Northallerton | 30 miles from Middlesbrough | **ACCESS**

## Thorp Perrow Arboretum, North Yorkshire

**T**horp Perrow, an 85-acre arboretum near Bedale, provides interest all year round. In early spring there is one of the most extensive displays of daffodils in the north of England. The daffodils give way to blossom-covered trees, carpets of bluebells and drifts of wildflowers in summer. Later in the year, autumn provides stunning colours in the extensive woodland.



© Janet Burdon



**How to get there** Leave the A1 at Leeming Bar and take the A684 to Bedale. From Bedale, take the B6268 towards Masham. After two miles, turn right (signposted to Thorp Perrow). There is a large car park on site.

**What to shoot** In May, the carpets of bluebells are among some of the best in the north of England.

**Best time of day** Thorp Perrow Arboretum is open daily from 10am to 5pm; it's best to get there when it first opens.

**Nearest food/drink** The Tea Room, Thorp Perrow Arboretum, Bedale, DL8 2PS, 01677 425323, [thorpperrow.com](http://thorpperrow.com).

**Nearest accommodation** High Grange Holiday Cottages and Farmhouse, The Cottages, Bedale, DL8 2HQ, 01677 42270, [high-grange.co.uk](http://high-grange.co.uk).

**Other times of year** Summer for wildflowers; autumn for seasonal colour.

**Ordnance Survey map** LR 99

**Nearby locations** Hackfall Wood (5 miles); Studley Royal deer park (10 miles).



# The need to know

*The task of trying out a groundbreaking new camera prior to its release is an enlightening experience for **David Noton**, and one that takes him to South Africa, but the real eye-opener comes several weeks later when he sees the printed results*

I'm stoked, well and truly – you need to know that. It's a relief, because so far here in the Cape I would say that pressure has been the dominant factor. The sun has shone and the locations are epic, but as yet I haven't been able to nurture the relaxed frame of mind experience has taught me spawns creativity. Granted, I've only been in the country for 36 hours, and anyway, I'm not here for my enjoyment or to top up the tan; putting a new camera through its paces is the task. So new is this body now atop my tripod on the edge of the cliff that it's the only one of its kind in the western hemisphere. It is also disguised and devoid of markings in case I'm spotted; such is the secrecy surrounding this mystery product.

I was told what I needed to know about the mystery product in a stark cell swept for bugs at Photokina back in September. A DSLR with a super high-resolution sensor, a camera aimed squarely at the likes of us; landscape photographers demanding the utmost image quality. I was quietly sceptical; do we really need 50-plus megapixels? I wasn't convinced of the likely benefits, and was wary of the drawbacks, but being the first landscape photographer in the world to be given the opportunity to use it in anger and find out was undoubtedly a privilege. And a pressure; I'd only have the camera for just over a week, and it went without saying that top notch results were expected. My immediate concern was how I could maximise productivity in the short time I'd have with the camera. Visions of grey winter days in Blighty passing one after another gave rise to the idea of heading further south in search of sweeping vistas and dependable light, but where? New Zealand? South America? Too far; I'd spend way too much time in the air or crucified by jet lag. Nope, a 10-hour flight south, within near enough the same time zone, to the sun-drenched landscapes of South Africa seemed the best option.

Just a short time before leaving (in another stark cell, this time in Uxbridge), I was handed the mystery product with almost religious solemnity. And the name of it is the Canon EOS 5Ds. After a 10-minute briefing I was on my way to the airport for the night flight to Cape Town.

So, here I am, overlooking the craggy cliffs of Kogel Bay. The late afternoon light is gorgeous and the waves are rolling in as if to order, yet

the fierce wind that the Cape is known for is mercifully absent. Just as well; I need everything on my side to be able to demonstrate the searing resolution of this camera. Any wind buffeting would rob me of that ultimate sharpness, the pursuit of which means I'm extra attentive with my focusing and depth of field considerations. But I'm pretty sure this shot is working, which is why I'm stoked.

I stand back from the tripod, watching the live view display as another series of big waves roll in, thumb poised on the remote release button. I'm using the 24mm TS-E lens with just a touch of droop tilt; I suspect this optic will prove to be a natural bedfellow for this high-resolution camera. I really couldn't ask for better side lighting on the scene, but a few clouds in the sky would be nice. Ah well, we photographers are never entirely happy. The sun dips all too quickly below the horizon and I'm on my way back. Rounding False Bay, my phone chirps with a message from The Organisation. They need to know what I think of the camera so far.

I don't know how to respond. The truth is, in the field there's no real difference to what I've been used to for the last three years using the Canon EOS 5D MkIII. Sure, the time images take to write to the card is a bit longer, otherwise the 5Ds is very similar to its stablemate. I won't really know what to think until I can examine the results carefully. Right now, my job is to crack on and make the images.

Six weeks later I'm looking at the Kogel Bay image slowly emerging from my printer. I've got used to the incredible fine detail apparent in the 5Ds images, but it still amazes me. Last week at the press launch I'd been gobsmacked by the clarity of my Cape of Good Hope shot seen as a two-metre wide print. A decade ago I would have sworn it had been captured with a 5x4 format camera or bigger, but no; it was a giant print enlarged from a sensor area not much bigger than my thumbnail. Regardless of your particular brand allegiance, that is a pretty incredible thing to behold. But traces of my scepticism remained; after all, how often do we really make prints that large?

The A3-plus print of Kogel Bay was the final proof in the pudding. I now realised the subtle yet tangibly enhanced clarity and image quality was apparent even at that size. There was no

going back. Next week I'd be off to Iceland and I just didn't want to be there without those 50 megapixels in reserve.

The main players in the world of photography are currently in an arms race trying to outdo each other in the Battle of the Pixels. What we photographers need to know is: do we need these ultra-high resolution cameras, be it a Nikon, Sony, Pentax or Canon? The answer clearly has to be no, most of the time. Will they make us better photographers? Of course not. Do they have their drawbacks? Undoubtedly. They are slower, less adept at high ISOs and more demanding of memory and processing capacity than cameras with lower pixel densities. And yet most of us photographers are, by definition, perfectionists endlessly chasing ultimate quality. Logic doesn't really come into it. In the past we had to weigh up the draw of ultimate image quality as delivered by medium or large formats against the portability, flexibility and versatility of what I still think of as a 35mm SLR. Now it seems all that has changed.

Do you remember when you first saw HD TV? It seemed amazing at the time. Now it's the norm, and when I see TV clips from the 80s I wonder that we ever thought such fuzzy footage was watchable. Inevitably, 4K will soon replace HD, and so it goes on. In the world of stills photography, the pace of evolution has been just as heady. It doesn't seem but a decade ago on the Nikon stand at Focus that a technician was assuring me a half-frame 5MP sensor was all I would ever need. He was wrong, but I was wrong too when just a few years ago I opined that diminishing returns make high pixel density sensors beyond the 20MP mark pointless. The results from the 50MP Canon EOS 5Ds here on my printer tray speak for themselves. Of course, ultimately all this techno talk is a diversion because the only thing that matters in the end is the pictures. The joy of photography is all about being there in places like Kogel Bay when Mother Nature smiles, not endless pontification about pixel density, corner resolution and dynamic range. But it is a fact that when I look at the scans of all those 35mm transparencies in my library dating back through time, they now look pretty sad in comparison despite representing a significant part of my life's work.





Kogel Bay, Western  
Cape, South Africa.  
*Canon EOS 5Ds  
with 24mm TS-E  
lens, 0.8sec at f/11,  
0.9 ND filter,  
polariser, tripod*





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# INTERNATIONAL GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 8



*Now in its eighth year, this pre-eminent competition for garden and wildflower photographers has again produced a set of wonderful images. These are some of our favourites*

















*opening page*

**Breathing Spaces – 3rd Place**

Anil Sud

Tree in fog

*previous spread*

**Trees, Woods and Forests  
– 1st Place**

Mark Gray

Mystic forest

*opposite*

**European Garden Photography  
Award – 3rd Place**

Sergey Karepanov

Staircase to autumn

*right*

**The Beauty of Plants – Finalist**

Jacky Parker

Jackie in pink



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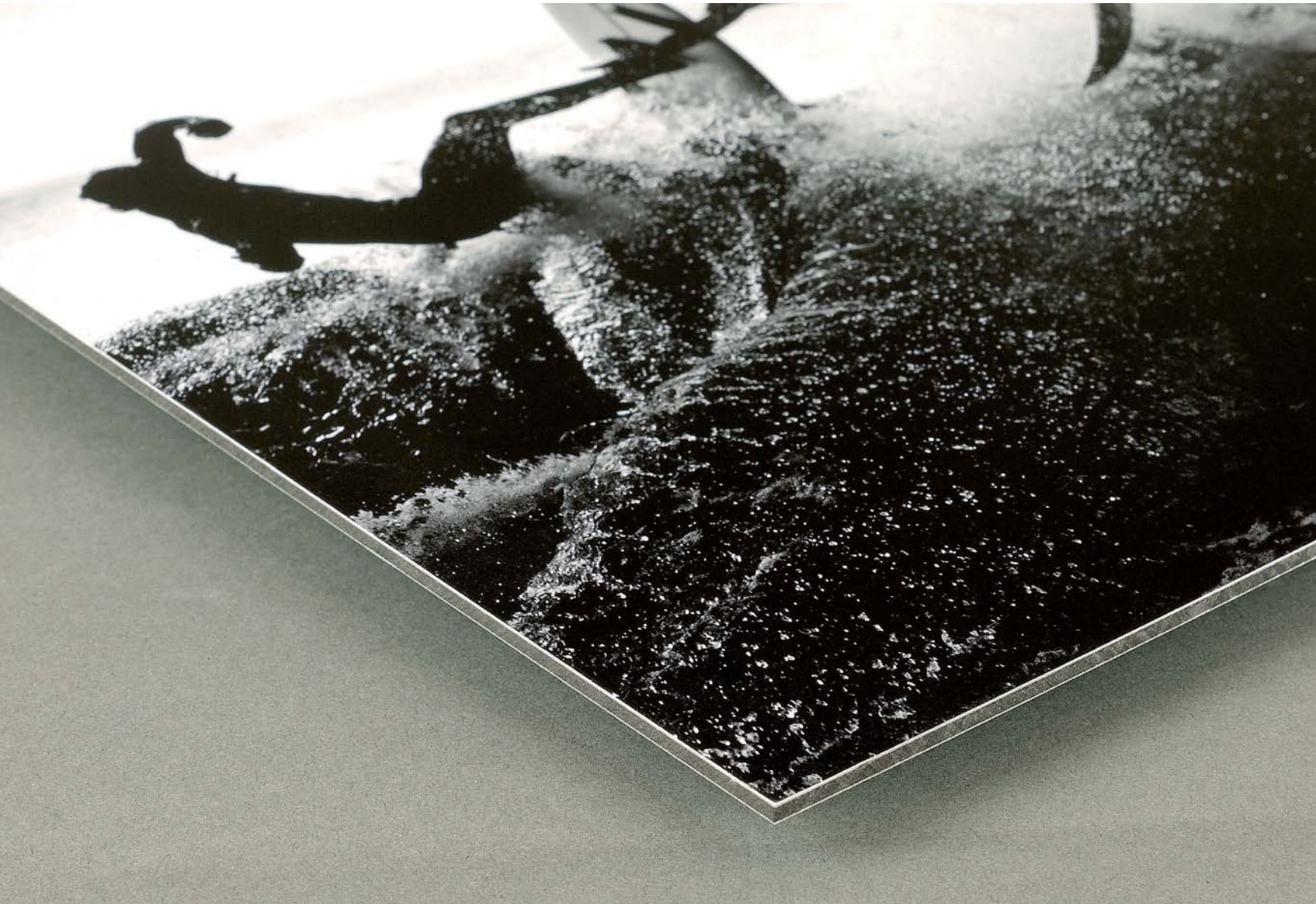
The *International Garden Photographer of the Year: Collection 8* book is now available and showcases all the winners and the best images entered into the competition. It is published by Garden Photo Press, and costs £18.99. Following the exhibition's successful launch at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, it will now be on at the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh until 31 May ([rbge.org.uk](http://rbge.org.uk)). Further exhibitions will be taking place at other UK venues throughout the year. For more information, go to [igpoty.com](http://igpoty.com).

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# READER GALLERY

*Each month we publish the very best images from all those entered for our reader gallery. Turn to page 84 to find out how to submit your images. This month's winner is...*





## Paul Richards

I used to work as a countryside manager, and as part of the job I took photos and gave many talks and lectures on the conservation of habitats and wildlife management work taking place in our nature reserves and country parks. When I was 10, I told my mother I wanted to be a wildlife filmmaker, but parental pressure, and the usual advice to go to university first, led to a career in fisheries and countryside management instead. It wasn't until I took an early retirement package around 10 years ago that photography and wildlife watching once again became a major part of my life.

Being a country boy brought up in mid-Wales, I've always been closely associated with wildlife, particularly that found in or around water. The beautiful river Wye provided me with so many memorable moments during my younger years. In those early days I didn't photograph the wildlife, but learnt the art

of getting close to it through many hours spent observing and studying. Fieldcraft, for me, remains the greatest pleasure.

My style is constantly developing. I am moving towards a more abstract approach, but will never turn down a true wildlife action or portrait shot. I love capturing the backlighting on a bird in flight, or shooting through blurred vegetation to frame the subject.

My ambitions as a photographer now relate more to developing my skills in fine-art abstract nature. I enjoy helping others to become better photographers, especially in the form of one-to-one photo workshops in the areas I know well: west Wales, mid Wales (where I have exclusive access to woodland boxes used by pied flycatchers and other less common woodland birds) and Norfolk. I am often asked to help camera club enthusiasts achieve high-scoring prints in competitions. The key to this is to use your eyes to find the



**Hometown** Sheringham, Norfolk  
**Occupation** Wildlife photographer  
**Photographic experience** Over 10 years  
[pronature.co.uk](http://pronature.co.uk)

right subject matter and practise good technique to get the quality shot in the first place. After that the print becomes far easier.

I sell my prints in a number of galleries and am an associate tutor for the Field Studies Council, running courses throughout the year at their centres at Margam and Orierton. The camera club scene is enjoyable, as it makes a welcome break from the isolation of being a wildlife photographer in the field, and I have been successful in many international salons and achieved distinctions. I've also become a judge for the Welsh Photographic Federation.

Although I now live in Norfolk, I still retain strong links with the landscapes, wildlife and photographers in Pembrokeshire.



*previous spread* One of my bestselling fine art prints – a simple but peaceful image, with sand dune background colours and pleasing subject matter. The male stonechat is relaxed and perching on dead gorse, taking a break from feeding the hungry newly fledged young.  
Canon EOS 1D MkIII with Canon EF 500mm f/4 L IS lens and 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 200, 1/160sec at f/7.1, handheld

*above* Hares are animals that inspire fascination but, because they are so observant, getting close is a real challenge for a photographer. I have spent many early mornings lying flat in the mud in a field to experience these beautiful creatures.  
Canon EOS 1D MkIV with Canon 500mm f/4 L IS USM lens and 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 800, 1/1600sec at f/5.6, supported on photo bag





## WHY WE LOVE THEM...

Achieving simple and graphic compositions can be especially difficult with wildlife, as you usually have far less control over and awareness of the background scene – due to being focused so heavily on the subject. Thanks to his dedication to fieldcraft, Paul has produced some fresh and wonderfully striking images that fully convey the character of the animals. In each, the lighting and colours perfectly complement the wildlife, and every image has its own unique charm, from the expression on the frog's face to the relaxed one-legged stance of the stonechat. It's easy to see the sheer amount of time and effort that Paul puts into his photography, and his skills at picking the right moment.

*above* An early spring shot of spawning frogs in a woodland pond. The golden light reflected on the water from late evening sunshine and last year's dead golden bracken gives the photo a warm feel. Photographing at ground level captures a moment and gives the viewer the feeling of being in the pond with the frogs. *Canon EOS 1D MkIII with Canon 300mm f/4 L IS USM lens, ISO 800, 1/80sec at f/8, supported on bag*

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# A photographer's guide to life on Earth

*In the second instalment of our thought-provoking new series, **Chris Weston** recounts two life-changing experiences that have led him to see the world from a completely new perspective*



## PART 2 Infinite potential: the source of creative energy

---

When I first read the book *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah* by Richard Bach, I was enthralled. A close friend had given it to me as a gift as I was leaving the UK for a one-year sabbatical to Australia. I read it on the plane, and again on my first night in Sydney. I was 21 years old and unaware that I was reading a book that would change my life forever.

On a Monday morning 11 years later, a quote from *Illusions* floated in front of me, causing me to quit my job and follow my passion for wildlife photography (Part 1, OP190). Little did I know then that another quote from the same book would cause a similar revolution in my life several years later.



## Imagine it's already there

It was the winter of 2014 and I had been in Yellowstone National Park for two weeks. I had seen the usual wildlife suspects – ice-encrusted bison, lolloping elk, coyotes, eagles and swans – but I was desperate to see Yellowstone's most famous inhabitant, the wolf.

Despite being one of the best locations in the world for spotting wolves, this apex predator is still a rare sighting. I had seen wolves only twice before in Yellowstone and things weren't looking too positive on this trip. None of the guides had seen any signs of wolf – no tracks, no scat, no kills – and the spotting boards (notice boards on which visitors write down wildlife sightings) were blank. Even so, my mind was open to the potential.

One morning during my trip I climbed into the front cab of the snow-coach as usual. As we began the journey into the park – a long, quiet road swathed in the cloak of twilight – I closed my eyes. And there, in the darkness in front of me, I saw the words, 'To bring anything into your life, imagine that it's already there.' I recognised them from the book *Illusions*, although, like many of the teachings described by Richard Bach, I didn't fully comprehend them or, more accurately, I didn't fully understand how to make them real.

Despite that, with my eyes still closed, in my mind I visualised an image of a wolf standing amid the tall lodgepole pines that define the Yellowstone landscape.

The snow-coach trundled on.

## Manifestations

About half an hour later, I was making some final checks of my cameras, when there was a commotion on the road ahead. Large numbers of vehicles – vans, snow-coaches and snowmobiles – were lined up and people were wandering about excitedly. We pulled over and I climbed down, grabbing my camera bag. In the distance, I heard someone shout, 'wolf' in explanation of the ruckus. I scanned the ridgeline, seeing nothing. I walked ahead without knowing why, other than it felt like the right thing to do – instinct overpowering hesitation.

My eyes were glued to the ridgeline when, out of the corner of one eye, I saw a flicker of contrast. I turned my gaze and there, among the trees, regal in its confidence, was a lone white wolf. He was walking intently, slightly above me, and I followed, parallel to his path. He was always a step ahead. Then he stopped and turned his head towards me. I lifted the camera and he gazed straight down the barrel of my lens. A silent acknowledgement passed between us and then, as quickly as he'd arrived he was gone.

Back at the snow-coach, the chatter between the guides was energetic. It was their first wolf sighting in weeks, but the real reason for their excitement was that it was the first white wolf they'd ever seen. By the end of my time in Yellowstone, 10 days later, he hadn't been seen again.

I kept my own thoughts to myself. I didn't really manifest a wolf by 'imagining it was already there'. My morning epiphany and the appearance of the wolf was coincidence – surely?







Anything else was simply too ‘woo-woo’ to consider. I have a scientist’s mind, and there is nothing in any of the classic sciences with which I’m familiar that could explain conjuring a wild animal from thought alone.

I am also a bit of a romanticist, however. And although my mind demands the rigors of science when understanding nature and the world around us, the idea of being able to manifest images at will was a fun illusion that was worth playing with.



## The power of thought

For the rest of my time in Yellowstone, I set aside my usual approach to image-making (my back-to-front theory of composition, explained in last month’s article) and simply spent time truly connecting with my environment. Rather than chase light and pre-determined ideas I sat in a single spot, letting my senses be caressed by nature and trying to envisage my next image. And the strangest thing happened.

As I imagined each new image, by some twist of light and magic, immediately it would appear in front of me. I imagined a coyote – a coyote appeared, cool and inquisitive. I imagined an elk surviving in the harshness of winter – an elk appeared, forlorn in its isolation. I imagined bison in a crystal landscape – bison appeared along with rays of sparkling light.

I have had similar experiences in the past. I remember an occasion in India, watching a leopard hidden in some bushes. I imagined the leopard waking out of the bush, crossing an open area of grassland in front of me and settling at a nearby pool of water to drink. Ten minutes after seeing that picture in my mind, the leopard did exactly that. On another occasion, I imagined a grizzly bear snorkelling for salmon in a crystal-clear pool. That thought led to some quite remarkable GoPro footage of a fishing bear. But these were isolated moments that might also be explained in part by knowledge of animal behaviour, and nothing at all like the consistent flow of images that occurred in Yellowstone.

Sadly, after days of thoughtful experimentation, my time in Yellowstone was up and playtime was over. I had to get back to the office and serious work. Still, in the volcano-like centre of my mischievous mind, a thought bubbled away.



## Another unexpected journey

A couple of months later, I was in the car with my partner, Monique, travelling back to Switzerland from the south of France. It's a long journey from the Mediterranean to the Alps, and we were both tired and conversation was slow.

To fill the silence, Monique asked if I wanted to listen to something, suggesting some music or an audio book. Normally I would choose music because I have little auditory awareness, which means music is about all I can cope with. On this occasion, however, for reasons I can't explain, I chose the book option, picking one at random.

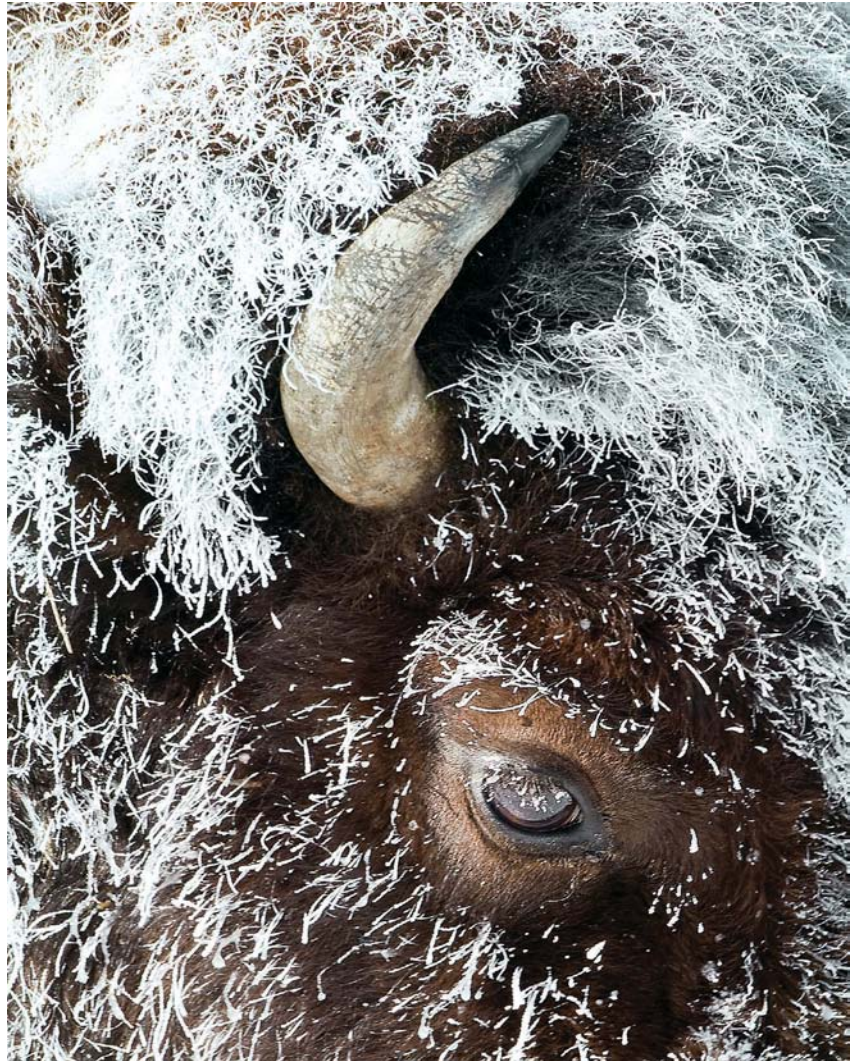
At some point, I don't remember exactly when, I started to tune in. Here and there the narration would penetrate my auditory barrier and ping around my head as if my mind was the play zone of a pinball machine. I heard words and sentences such as 'consciousness' and 'quantum domain' and 'mindfulness' and 'mind is the maker of reality'. Something inside my psyche was beginning to put two and two together and coming up with an answer. I asked Monique to grab a pen and write something down so I wouldn't forget:

'The science of quantum mechanics asserts that in the beginning was potential. Potential was followed by chaos and chaos was followed by order. Photography mirrors the quantum world: photography starts with the potential for an image (the visualised idea), which is followed by chaos (the visual objects presented by nature), which is followed by order – composition.'

I then asked her to write down the question, 'What does quantum physics reveal about our individual creativity?'

In answering that question so this journey, this great new adventure, begins.

*In next month's chapter of A photographer's guide to life on Earth: 'Everything is connected to everything else'.*











above Katrmi, Mursi tribe, Chamolo village  
opposite Arbile, Mursi tribe, Marege village

## PEOPLE OF THE OMO VALLEY

*When photographer **Ben Pipe** headed to Ethiopia he was under no illusion that his experiences there would be unique. Instead, he went with a specific project in mind; to take portraits of the tribes, and the resulting images offer a powerful and fresh insight into their lives*

I was drawn to Ethiopia, and the Omo Valley, by the incredible style of the people who inhabit this ancient part of the world. Their body scarification, lip plates, hairstyles and clothes all looked intriguing during my pre-trip research.

Shooting alongside other photographers is something I prefer not to do, so when I arrived I stressed to my guide that it would be better to get to the more distant villages. I think many of us have fantasies of being the first foreigner to arrive at some untouched place, but a paved road was laid into the valley five years ago and has made it an up-and-coming tourism destination. So the tribes in the Omo Valley were well accustomed to photographers – often they would begin adding face paint when the cars arrived. Indeed, the Mursi tribe, with their lip plates, charged money per click of the shutter, knowing that photographers and tourists would happily pay up.

We travelled through the valley, from Arba Minch down to Lake Turkana near the Kenya border, and then back up

again. The trip wouldn't have been possible without my guide John and my driver Bili. I needed John to translate everything, and we usually had to hire a local guide for each tribe because they each have their own language.

I tried to spend time meeting the people – observing their way of life – and planning possible locations for the shots, rather than rushing to get the camera out and start snapping. That can be the temptation when you are witnessing scenes that are so exotic, but it rarely yields the best work.

I'd like to return to Ethiopia in the future, and visit the Surmi tribes on the less accessible western side of the Omo River.

*The people of the Omo Valley and their culture are under threat from a dam project on the Lower Omo River that will cut off the water supply for many of the tribes; you can sign a Survival International petition against the dam at [survivalinternational.org/tribes/omovalley](http://survivalinternational.org/tribes/omovalley).*

>









*above* Canekiy, Hamar tribe  
*opposite* Olibala, Mursi tribe, Marege village



Tina, Kara tribe, Korcho village



# SHENTON SAFARIS

A PHOTOGRAPHER'S DREAM

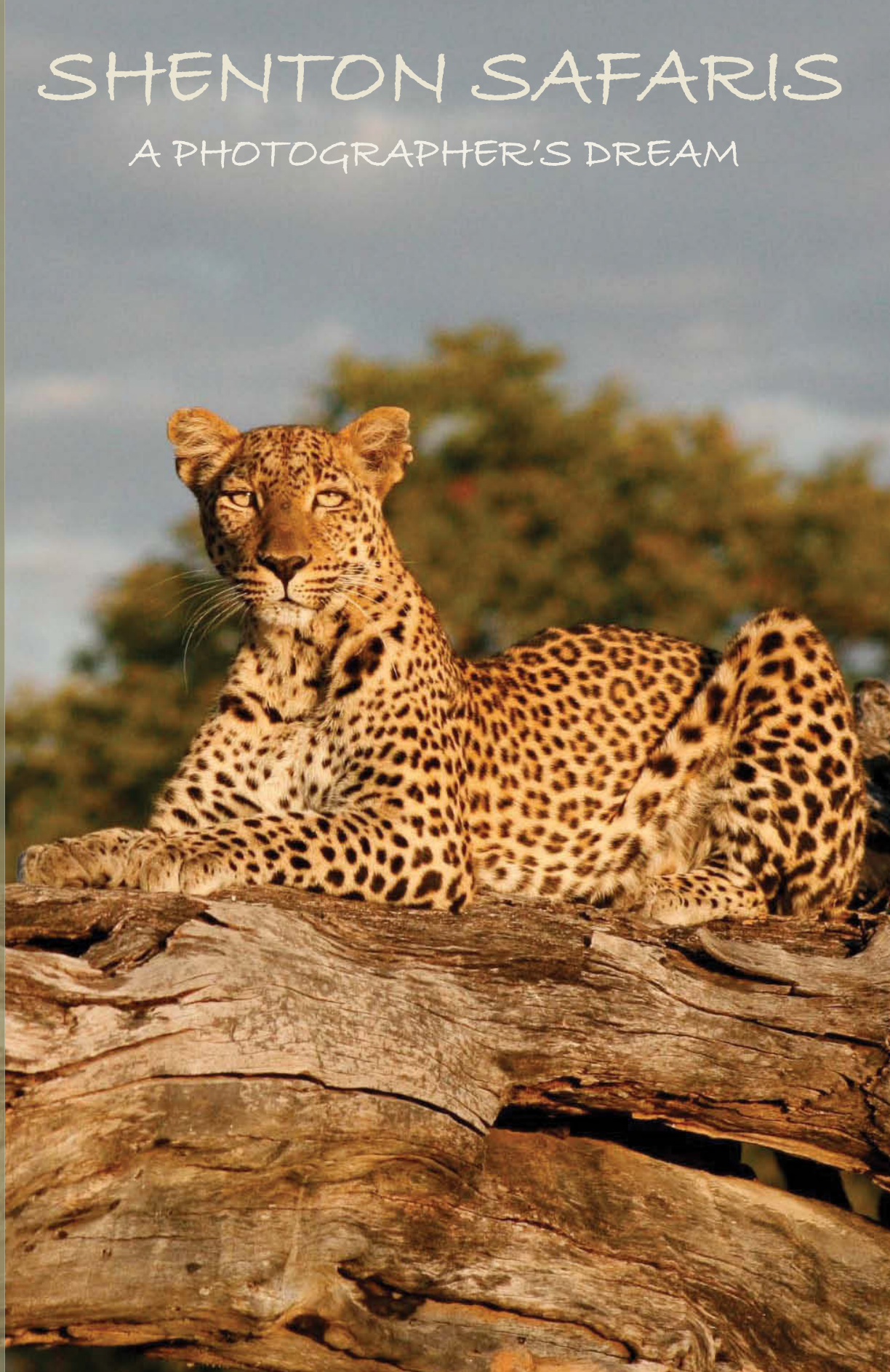
‘Derek Shenton’s network of photographic blinds are both a tribute to Derek’s ingenuity and to his superb knowledge of the wildlife of South Luangwa’

– *Frans Lanting, National Geographic*

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# NATURE ZONE

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## DISCOVER

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with nature**

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On the wing**



### TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Laurie Campbell explores ways of capturing magnified views of nature



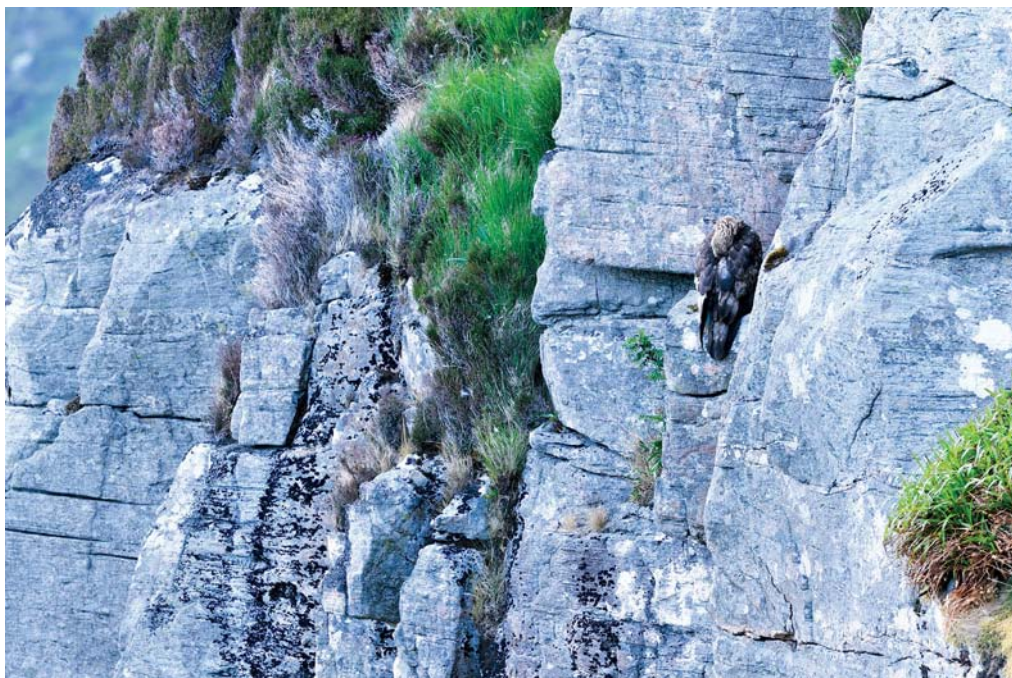
# Life in the Wild

*In his quest to obtain shots of distant wildlife, Laurie Campbell has found that the Nikon 1 mirrorless cameras offer a handy and effective solution. He has since been exploring magnified views of nature at all scales*

Several years ago, while attending the Scottish Nature Photography Fair, I watched a presentation by Perthshire photographer Keith Ringland. I've known Keith for a long time and, as with most acquaintances that happen around nature photography, I felt that I had met the man through his photographs before doing so in person. What originally drew my attention to his work was a striking image I'd seen published of a Scottish wildcat crossing a burn in a forest at night. This was long before the days of stealth cameras, so I guessed he had set up an un-manned camera to be triggered with a pressure switch or an infrared beam. Whatever the method, it didn't really matter because this was an exceptionally rare image – and still is.

Further into his presentation, Keith showed a series of images of a Scottish wildcat with young kittens by a rock den, but they were photographed at extreme range so they were tiny in the frame. This is because he was photographing from a forestry shelter belt, and with so much open ground between him and the den, introducing a hide into an area where there was little natural cover would have been problematic.

A few months beforehand I had read an article about digiscoping, the practice of attaching a compact digital camera to a telescope to achieve enormous magnifications; the equivalent of which, in 35mm terms, could be 2000-3000mm or more. This, it seemed, would have been the perfect solution to Keith's



I had no idea that this adult female golden eagle roosted on this cliff ledge, about 60m from the eyrie containing its chick, until I spent my first 30-hour session in my tiny hide close to the nest. I chose my longest lens and used my highest resolution camera at its lowest ISO setting to obtain the best quality file possible, thinking that I may be able to crop it. Un-cropped, this image shows just how far away the eagle is and how small it appears in the frame.

*Nikon D3X with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 100, 20sec at f/5.6, cable release, mirror-lock, tripod, hide*



Photographed from exactly the same position, this image shows how much bigger the eagle appears in the frame. The image quality is better than that of a file cropped to the same proportions and from a camera with almost two and a half times as many megapixels.

*Nikon 1 V1 with FT-1 adaptor, Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens and Nikon 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 400, 20sec at f/5.6, remote release, tripod*



problem. True, under normal photography circumstances the low megapixel count of those cameras wouldn't have equalled the image quality obtainable with film, but then the opportunity to photograph a family of Scottish wildcats is incredibly rare. I could see the occasional need for this technology with my own work, but my problem was that I didn't have a telescope, nor did I have any plans to invest in one because I already owned something called a Nikon lens-scope converter. This amazingly compact little device attached to the rear of any of my Nikon mount lenses and converted it into a telescope. It produced six times the magnification of the lens, so when added to my 500mm, for example, I had a 60x scope.

Ironically, I already owned a 4MP Nikon Coolpix 4500, one of the most commonly used cameras for digiscoping. I had purchased it for photographing sheets of transparencies on a lightbox placed on a copy-stand by way of keeping a precise record of what I was sending to clients in the days when film was still king. So I let the digiscoping idea go until a decade or so later when the Nikon 1 system was launched, complete with the FT-1 adaptor that allows regular DSLR lenses to be attached with a resulting 2.7x crop factor. Knowing that I was soon to start a project photographing



Photographing familiar subjects, such as these moss stems at high magnification, opens up a whole new world of possibilities. Moving the camera just a few centimetres either side of this composition and focusing back and forth throughout the depth of the subject, I shot scores of different pictures.

*Nikon 1 V3 with FT-1 adaptor, Nikon PN-11 extension tube and Voigtlander APO-Lanthar 120mm f/2.5 macro lens, ISO 400, 1/5sec at f/11, remote release, beanbag*

golden eagles on Harris, I jumped at the chance and invested in a Nikon 1 V1. The camera allowed me to take publishable photographs that would have otherwise been impossible. In recent months, I've upgraded to a Nikon 1 V3, tempted by the

prospect of the 18.4MP sensor. I am now experimenting with exploiting the inherent gain in depth of field offered by using cameras with small sensors, by attaching my DSLR macro lenses to explore a world well beyond life size.



Photographed in failing light against a dusky sky, these moss capsules (as yet unidentified) were only about two millimetres long.

*Nikon 1 V3 with FT-1 adaptor, Nikon PN-11 extension tube and Voigtlander APO-Lanthar 120mm f/2.5 macro lens, ISO 800, 8sec at f/11, remote release, beanbag*

## LAURIE'S FACTFILE

» Although my new little Nikon 1 V3 camera produces bigger image files than my full-frame Nikon D4, it is unrealistic to start trying to compare the output from the two cameras. The question to ask is this: what exactly do you expect to do with your photographs? The answer to this one question, more than any other, should resolve all sorts of other considerations, such as how many megapixels do you really need, how high an ISO you can get away with using, or how much extra do you need to spend on lenses. In a way, professional photographers aren't always the best people to ask because we tend to have a 'no compromise' approach, in that we often buy equipment we can't really afford and then undertake the most exacting working techniques to produce the biggest and best quality image files we can so that they can adequately cope with just about any use requested of them. If your requirements aren't as great, and all you need is images to post on the web or to produce say, an A3 print, then you can take an awful lot of shortcuts and nobody will see much difference.

» Personally speaking, my Nikon 1 V3 isn't going to replace any of my Nikon DSLRs at the moment; it is strictly reserved for occasions when there is absolutely no other way of achieving the result I'm after with my DSLR equipment. When used carefully, and by shooting Raw files at modest ISO settings, I believe it is a serious tool. While other manufacturers offer mirrorless cameras giving slightly higher image quality and yet more megapixels, none have the advantage of that 2.7x crop factor and the ability to shoot with DSLR lenses with continuous autofocus, image stabiliser and a burst rate of up to 60fps.

» In terms of convenience, and thinking about everything else I carry around with me, adding a Nikon 1 camera to my pack isn't such a big consideration. Then again, for those unwilling or unable to carry bulkier, heavier cameras, or for anyone who simply wants access to far greater magnification from even fairly modest existing DSLR telephoto lenses, then there are significant advantages to consider.



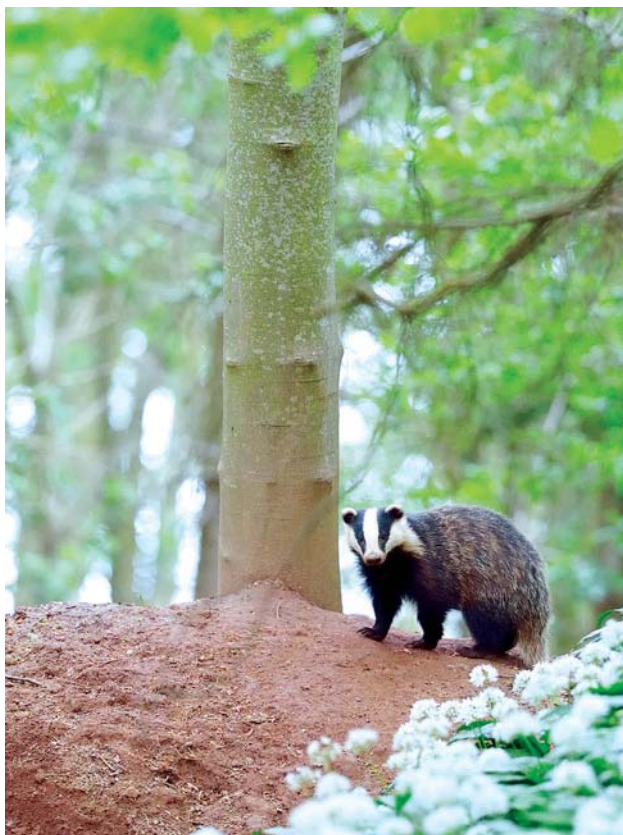
# What to shoot this month...

## Laurie's May highlights



▲ With the possible exception of gannets (*Morus bassanus*), which have a much longer breeding season, May and June are the peak months for visiting seabird colonies to photograph what are mostly black and white birds. In the midday sun, it can be very difficult to obtain the correct exposure and retain detail in highlight and shadow areas. It can also be a challenge to record a catch-light in the eye of species such as **Arctic terns** (*Sterna paradisaea*), which are dark around the head. Arranging to photograph early or late in the day, when the sun is lower in the sky, is often a better solution to both problems.

Nikon D3X with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 200, 1/100sec at f/4, cable release, beanbag



◀ With the lengthening hours of daylight, many of our deciduous woodlands should still be flush with carpets of spring flowers such as bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*). This means there is a strong possibility of photographing **badgers** (*Meles meles*) in attractive settings. The ever improving high ISO performance of digital cameras and lens stabilisation technology can make it easier to obtain sharp images without having to resort to using electronic flash. Just remember to arrive and be settled at least two hours before sunset.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 200mm f/2 lens, ISO 1000, 1/6sec at f/2.8, cable release, tripod

▲ Also known as wild garlic, **ramsons** (*Allium ursinum*) are good indicators of ancient woodland, where they flower between April and June. If you are planning to photograph badgers or foxes in the same habitat using scrim camouflage netting to drape around yourself or over your tripod, lay the netting on to a patch of ramson leaves beforehand and spend a couple of minutes trampling over it. The material will become impregnated with the aromatic onion smell, which can help to mask your own scent.

Nikon F4S with Nikon 200mm f/4 macro lens, Fuji Velvia ISO 50, 1/8sec at f/16, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod



▲ It may have an unusual name, but the **mottled umber moth** (*Erannis defoliaria*) is a relatively common and widespread species. The flight period of the adult moths occurs much later in the year, from October to December, and the larvae hatch from March onwards and begin feeding on the leaves of a wide variety of species of trees and shrubs. The caterpillars are distinctive because they only have legs at either ends of their bodies, and move in a characteristic looping, rolling motion.

Nikon D3X with Nikon 200mm f/4 macro lens and extension tube, ISO 250, 1.3sec at f/22, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod



## MORE SEASONAL SUBJECTS...

### Flora

**Spring sandwort** (*Minuartia verna*) – a relatively rare, delicate, low-growing, white-flowered plant. It does not, as its name suggests, grow on sand; look for it on rocky ground.

**Adder's tongue** (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) – not a flowering plant, but a fern that can be found growing mainly on damp ground.

### Fauna

**Green hairstreak butterfly** (*Callophrys rubi*) – the only truly green British butterfly; it's difficult to spot – if you find one, watch carefully to see where it lands if disturbed.

**Maybug or cockchafer** (*Melolontha melolontha*) – a substantial, large-bodied insect that is frequently attracted to artificial lights.

**Bee-fly** (*Bombylius major*) – so-called, of course, because it mimics a bumblebee, but they are fluffier and make a high-pitched humming sound in flight.

## WORLD WILDLIFE SPECTACLES



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### Caribbean spiny lobsters, USA

Caribbean spiny lobsters, which inhabit tropical and subtropical waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, are famed for their migratory marches. They spend summer in the shallows, mainly on coral reefs and in mangrove swamps, hiding in crevices by day and foraging for food at night. Each autumn, in response to the coming winter storms, adults gather in groups of between 50–60 individuals and march in long processions in single file across the ocean floor to reach deeper waters. One of the few invertebrates capable of true navigation, they cover up to nine miles each day and use the Earth's magnetic field to migrate.

### Bird migration, Canada

Point Pelee in Ontario, the southernmost point of mainland Canada, is one of the best places to witness the arrival of migratory songbirds in spring. Numbers often peak in mid-May, when it is possible to see flocks of colourful birds in their

breeding plumage. It is especially renowned for its variety of warbler species. Find out more about Point Pelee at: [pc.gc.ca](http://pc.gc.ca).



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## 10 SPOTS FOR LIMESTONE FLORA

Despite their windswept and barren appearance, limestone pavements are rich wildlife habitats and home to some rare and fascinating species. The most extensive pavements occur on the carboniferous limestone of northern England – from Morecambe Bay to the Pennines. Formed around 300 million years ago, the rock was once the ocean floor of a warm, shallow sea, but became exposed as the land shifted and the seas retreated. During the last ice age (over 10,000 years ago) the rock was deeply scoured by glaciers. Weathering and erosion has resulted in the characteristic narrow fissures (grikes) and blocks (clints) that we see today. The exposed areas support plants adapted to dry conditions and thin, calcareous soils, while the fissures are home to plants that thrive in humid, shaded environments. Here are some of the best flower-rich limestone locations in the UK and Ireland – to find out more and to plan a visit go to: [limestone-pavements.org.uk](http://limestone-pavements.org.uk).

### 1 Malham Cove, North Yorkshire

The UK's most famous limestone pavement and a geological wonder: the grikes are rich in plantlife, including dog's mercury, wood sorrel and a variety of ferns.

solomon's seal, dark red helleborine and lily of the valley. It's also a good time to look for ferns.

### 2 Whitbarrow Scar, Cumbria

Located south-west of Kendal, the reserve comprises woodland, grassland and limestone pavement. Plants include thyme, limestone bedstraw, dropwort, bird's-foot trefoil and dark red helleborine.

### 3 The Orton Fells, Cumbria

Located to the east of the Lake District, this spectacular limestone pavement supports a number of interesting plants, many of them woodland species. Small ash, hawthorn and hazel trees are also found in the grykes.

### 4 Hutton Roof Crag, Cumbria

This unusual reserve has extensive areas of limestone pavement as well as grassland and woodland. Summer flowers include angular

### 5 The Grange Pavements, Cumbria

Overlooking Morecambe Bay, this mosaic of wooded and open limestone pavements is easily accessed from Grange-over-Sands. The pavements on top of Hampfell, which lie 300m above sea level, are rich in lime-loving plant species.

### 6 Gait Barrows NNR, Lancashire

This mosaic of limestone habitats has the UK's most notable pavement flora. Please note: a permit is required to access some parts of the reserve – to apply visit: [gov.uk/government/publications/lancshires-national-nature-reserves](http://gov.uk/government/publications/lancshires-national-nature-reserves).

### 7 Great Orme, Conwy

More than 400 different types of wildflower can be found on this spectacular limestone headland near Llandudno: thrift, sea campion and bloody cranesbill cling to the sheer rock face; grassland species include wild thyme and common rockrose.

### 8 Strath, Skye

Situated to the south of the island, Strath has two lime-rich lochs and features Scotland's most extensive and florally rich limestone pavement. Plant species include tutsan, dark red helleborine, herb-Paris, burnet rose, stone bramble, primrose, wood anemone and common dog violet.

### 9 Killykeegan and Crossmurrin NNR, County Fermanagh

The most extensive area of limestone grassland in Northern Ireland and home to colourful plants such as pink thyme, blue harebell and yellow bird's-foot trefoil.

### 10 The Burren, County Clare

Covering over 150 square miles, the Burren is internationally renowned for its remarkable limestone landscapes and flora, with alpine-arctic plants growing alongside Mediterranean species. Flowers include spring gentian, mountain avens, shrubby cinquefoil and bloody cranesbill. It also has 23 different orchid species. [burrennationalpark.ie](http://burrennationalpark.ie)



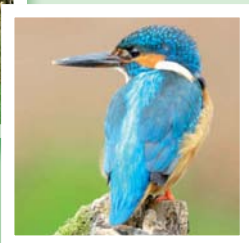
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## Having a field day

*Using his car as a hide, Kevin Sawford captures a colourful and engaging image of one of the UK's most beautiful native animals – the result of months of careful observation*

Roe deer is one of my favourite species, and I have spent many years in East Anglia compiling a portfolio of these animals. This image is definitely one I am very pleased with.

It may surprise you to learn that this image was taken from my car on a public road. It was the photographic highlight of many hours spent searching this particular area near to Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk.

I often use my car as a mobile hide, and over time you learn the best places particular species can be found. I have photographed many animals using this method, and find they are used to vehicles on the country roads. I will either park up and wait or drive slowly alongside

the animal. Succeeding in capturing wildlife shots in this way may sound improbable, and often the animal does run off, but with practice and persistence I have achieved images like this one of the roe deer many times.

The image itself was taken last June, but the story behind it goes back to August the previous year, when I first observed roe deer using this particular field. I noted that in the evenings they would emerge from a nearby wood to feed in the open. It seemed as though the deer were at ease in the mature wheat crop, as it provided cover.

The following year, as a fresh crop of wheat grew, I noticed that the field was also awash with poppies. As they came into flower I spent each evening waiting for the deer. Despite some

tolerance to the traffic, the deer would get spooked or I would get my own approach wrong and off the deer would go. On this particular evening, however, everything came together. I watched this buck come out to feed and slowly began approaching it down the road. Practice had taught me to have everything ready; car window down, beanbag placed on the windowsill and camera set up and ready on the passenger seat. Magically, the deer did not worry when I parked up, and I was able to take a series of images as it fed on the poppy, with this image being my favourite.

This has been the only year that the field has been full of poppies, so I'm pleased I spent so much time waiting to get this image.



# On the wing

*Following his house move last year, Steve Young is now the proud owner of a garden, and naturally he has been doing all he can to attract as many birds into it as possible*

**Robin and flowers:** Judging by the number of juvenile robins seen during the summer there is a good breeding population in the area; this adult is collecting mealworms thrown by me as I lie on my stomach, much to the amusement of my family and the neighbours.

Last summer I moved home. It was a bit unexpected and only happened because my parents went to live with my sister in Yorkshire due to illness. My dad had the house from new in 1955, and I'd lived there until the late 70s; he wanted me to take it over and keep it in the family, so I did. It's a lot smaller than my old terraced dwelling but it does have a garden. It's not a big garden, but it's big enough to be able to plan some photography once I've started attracting the birds down. I only had a yard before, with the odd blackbird and robin to keep me amused, so this was going to be a new, and hopefully nice, experience.

Most of the summer was spent at the house, decorating and having lots of major jobs done, but I have to admit the paintbrush was put down a number of times so I could keep checking the birds. My first job, aside from all the 'proper' jobs on the house of course, was to put up a feeding station to see what would appear. After a few weeks I was rewarded with the odd blue tit, greenfinch, goldfinch and robin.

Seeing all these species meant the camera and lens came with me on decorating days, along with a few boxes of live mealworms to try and attract robins and blackbirds. It took a little while, but when the robin realised what I was throwing out it just couldn't get enough;

blackbirds soon followed, with a male and female collecting mouthfuls at a time to take their nest. Juvenile robins soon began to appear, and over the summer at least 10 different young birds were seen; I should imagine that is at least three different broods, maybe even from different adults.

One or two of the young robins stayed throughout the summer and into winter; one in particular was identifiable because it kept the pale tips to the tertial feathers. Even as I write this column (in February) it has just landed on its usual perch for a morning feed of mealworms.

As summer turned to autumn I recorded great spotted woodpecker

on my fat-ball feeder, juvenile chiffchaff flitting among the ivy, two or three goldcrests and a big female sparrowhawk, which had discovered the new food source. I haven't seen it take any birds yet, but no doubt it will be on the hunt before too long.

My first winter in the garden was, it has to be said, disappointing. The usual birds came down and the greenfinch flock increased to a dozen, but goldfinch numbers were very low and there was nothing unusual, apart from the odd wintering chiffchaff. Nine blackbirds were fighting over the pears and mealworms during a brief cold spell, but no hoped-for fieldfare, redwing or even mistle thrush arrived to share the easy food.

Robin, great tit and house sparrow all used my spade as a perch, though, and a blue tit used an old nest box to roost in every evening, arriving 30 minutes before nightfall. A robin sang most evenings.

Spring is now on its way and wren, dunnock and blackbird are slowly starting to sing again; robin nest boxes have been put in place and I've let the ivy grow to encourage the blackbirds to nest in it. Plans are being made by others to tidy up the garden, but I like it just the way it is, as my own nature reserve.



**Blackbird:** I've been experimenting a little bit with wideangle shots taken using a remote for a different look and view of 'my' birds.



**Collared dove:** This birdbath has been used by a number of species including blackbird, house sparrow, greenfinch and these collared doves.



# Steve's May highlights



## Bird of the month

For all our breeding terns, spring is the time when, following their long migration from African wintering grounds, they settle down to raise young.

Sandwich tern is one of the larger tern species, bigger than arctic and common tern and with a yellow-tipped black bill, shaggy black crest and pale grey wings; all terns are very vocal but sandwich has a particularly grating 'kerrick' call – once heard it is instantly recognisable.

Tern colonies can be found around the UK, and birds can be very photogenic as they fly back and forth collecting fish, and also when they're in large flocks while moving towards their breeding grounds in early spring.



**Sandwich tern (far left):** A classic breeding plumaged sandwich tern, with shaggy black crest, black legs and bill with a yellow tip.

### Sandwich tern group

**(top):** Birds migrate in flocks and can be seen anywhere along the coast as they stop to feed and rest en route.

**Sandwich tern in flight (above):** The overall grey/white plumage is only broken by the black cap and greyer wedge on the primaries; this becomes darker and worn as the season progresses.

## BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP

One of the problems with my new garden is that during winter it is completely in the shade, so I had to turn to flash (or ridiculously high ISO settings) for better results. I have used flash only occasionally since my former life as a wedding photographer, but now it was time to try the technique on my garden birds. Using it on manual and at 1/16th power to add a bit of 'oomph', I managed to achieve some decent results, but it did take a bit of time.

Flash is not something to be scared of, and it is easy to practise these days because you can see what is happening on the camera screen. I'm still not totally happy with my results, and need to buy some brackets to use off-camera, but if your flashgun is rarely used, maybe it's time to experiment a little on birds in the shade to see if a little bit of flash can inject some life into dull shots.



**Blue tit:** Manual flash at 1/16th power with a diffuser has been used on this blue tit shot. There is a pinprick-sized flash highlight in the eye that I don't like, but at the small size reproduced here it isn't noticeable; this could of course be easily cloned out at the processing stage.



**Robin:** My faithful friend and practice subject. I used the same settings as for the blue tit to photograph this robin as it sat on its favourite perch in the shade waiting for mealworms.

## LOCATION OF THE MONTH

### Rathlin Island, County Antrim



© Andy Hay (rsb-images.com)

Lying just a few miles off Antrim's north coast, Rathlin Island has breathtaking scenery, unspoilt views and a wealth of wildlife, including Northern Ireland's biggest seabird colonies, and breeding grey and common seals.

The L-shaped island is just four miles long and one mile wide, but it has an array of coastal habitats. Its 100m basalt and chalk cliffs, to the north and south of the island, support thousands of nesting seabirds in late spring and early summer: guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes, puffins, fulmars, shags and gannets arrive to breed from mid-April – the RSPB's newly refurbished Seabird Centre offers close-up views of the birds. The Roonivoolin reserve, at the southernmost tip, is another important site for wildlife, including lapwing, corncrake, snipe and Irish hare. In May, carpets of wildflowers such as orchids appear on the island's hillsides, making this a fantastic time to visit.

**Getting there** Rathlin Island is reached via ferry from Ballycastle (£12 adult return, £6 child return). For a timetable, visit [rathlinballycastleferry.com](http://rathlinballycastleferry.com).

**Facilities** Hot drinks and refreshments are available on the island and there are several accommodation options. For details, visit [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com). The RSPB's Seabird Centre is open from 10am to 4pm, from April until the end of August.

**Website** and [rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/r/rathlin](http://rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/r/rathlin)



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# When the digital dream goes wrong...

*As photographers, we should be proudly proclaiming that the internet is the greatest invention. And yet, under constant threat of spammers, flammers, trolls and hackers, we find its greatest strengths can also be its Achilles' heel. Nick Smith takes a look into the darker areas of the web to see what lurks there*

It doesn't happen often admittedly, but sometimes the telephone will ring and there will be on the other end of the line a journalist wanting to interview me about my life as a photographer. Except for in the rarest of circumstances I will politely but absolutely decline the invitation. This is because the journalist in me thinks that more can be achieved by my asking questions than answering them. But there was a moment a few years ago when a rookie reporter midway through a project for her multi-media masters degree called me and I relented. She was hardly going to get hold of Sebastião Salgado, Steve McCurry or Annie Leibovitz, and so thinking I might be her best shot, I let flow the milk of human kindness.

After all the usual questions about what equipment I used ('same as everyone else') and what special techniques I employ ('none'), I could feel myself zoning out. But then she yanked the interview out of the fire by asking me what was the worst country I'd ever visited. Without doubt or delay I answered: 'the internet.' We both had a good laugh. She'd got the opening line she'd been working for, while I had been spectacularly witty. And there I thought the matter would lie.

The comment faded into the recesses of my memory. That is until a few days ago. I was sitting in the Dog and Duck in Soho with a fellow snapper exchanging inconsequential piffle, when I suddenly remembered that he'd just scooped a fancy photography award for his pictures of voles or otters, or something. As the celebratory pints of the brown and frothy lined up on the bar, I congratulated my friend heartily and settled back in the expectation of hearing heroic ballads about how his victory was won. But he suspiciously eyed his drink and grunted: 'It didn't bring me much happiness. I'm starting to wish I'd never entered the competition.'

What followed was quite distressing, something that could only happen in that worst of countries. It turns out that from the moment he held the freshly-polished gong in his hands, he'd been trolled, spammed, flamed and all those other nasty words we've had to redefine to describe a category of net squatter that seems to have no idea of what it means to be a citizen. My friend, who routinely drags his bodyweight in supplies and equipment to both poles for fun, is afraid of nothing, and yet was 'totally freaked out' by the abuse he had received from these unknown enemies. 'Forget it,' I said to my despondent friend: 'If these invertebrates don't have the humanity to put their name to their work, just delete them.'

People who communicate anonymously are cowards. Actually that's wrong. A coward is someone who knows what's right, but can't act on the guidance of his interior moral compass. The feral idiots who make anonymous threats online to decent folk are in fact (excuse the technical jargon here) scum. The only place they can make their home is in the scuzzy corners of the internet, hiding behind a veil of woefully misplaced superiority while they eat takeaway pizza in darkened bedrooms. They are frightened by the light of decency and they have no place in photography's moral orbit. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just 'swipe left'?

When you interview as many photographers as I do, from time to time you've just got to make the digital cold call. I go to their websites and dig out the 'info@' email address and drop them a cheerful line or two, explaining who I am and what I want from them. I'm always careful to reference things in the real world (such as my telephone number and my website URL) so that they can do their own due diligence and be reassured that they're not being spammed. And yet in probably half of these cases I will be met with a confrontational response, which I accept as good-naturedly as my increasingly jaundiced view of the digital world will allow. 'Yes,' I tell them, 'I am a real person and I'd like to talk to you about something creative, fun and beneficial to you.' Whether that is in any way reassuring, coming from me, I'll let you decide for yourself. But my point is that we're now in danger of reaching the stage where we've unintentionally started to become trolls ourselves, even when we are open about our identity. That can't be right.

If only we could live without the internet. But we can't, because we're at the point on the evolutionary maturation curve where things could not be better for us. For the well-intentioned user, the internet is an undreamed of modern Elysian Fields. We transmit our files, transact commerce in the form of e-retailing and take part in interactive training. We publish dynamic galleries, specialist online magazines and photoblogs in real time. We exploit social media platforms in ways that can transform the planet's attitudes to conflict, disease and poverty. But, above all, we can harness this power to share one of the greatest, most expressive and visually eloquent artforms that humankind has ever devised. And yet all this mind-boggling creativity has the potential to be cracked and tarnished, because its place of residence is the worst country in the world.



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A photograph of a forest scene. Two large tree trunks in the foreground are heavily covered in bright green moss. The background is filled with trees and foliage in autumn colors, including yellows, oranges, and browns. The lighting is soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

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You can send us links to your website, for us to view your general work only. Please note that strictly no correspondence will be entered into regarding website submissions. Send the link to [opweb@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:opweb@thegmcgroup.com).

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## RETURN OF YOUR WORK

Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

## PLEASE NOTE

Due to the many submissions we receive from our readers each month, no correspondence can be entered into. If you have not heard from us within 10 weeks (except for Viewpoints) then it is unlikely we will be using your work in the magazine on this occasion.

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GMC Publications cannot accept liability for the loss or damage of any unsolicited material, including slides.

## EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

If you would like an exhibition or event to be included in *Outdoor Photography*, please email Anna Bonita Evans at [anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com) at least 10 weeks in advance. You can also send information to the postal address (above).

## NEWS STORIES

Is there a current and time sensitive story you'd like us to cover in our Newsroom pages? Please email details to [claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com).





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# GEAR ZONE

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## ACQUIRE

88 **Gearing up**

90 **Camera test**



### **CANON EOS 7D MKII - UP CLOSE**

Andy Luck puts Canon's new mid-range offering through its paces



## Berghaus Vapourlight Hypertherm ▶

An update to their impressive Hypertherm jacket, Berghaus' new garment is aimed at those who get their kicks from extreme outdoor activities. Made from fabrics with different properties on either side, the jacket can be worn in two ways. One side (distinguished by a flame logo at the bottom seam) is highly wind-resistant to keep cool winds out and body heat in. When reversed, the air permeable fabric is on the outer side, meaning trapped body heat is reduced and breathability is increased. Super lightweight and synthetically filled, the hooded version weighs only 221g.

**Guide price** £150  
berghaus.com



## Nikon Coolpix P900 ▼

Nikon's Coolpix P900 sets new standards for compact cameras: its remarkable 83x optical zoom means photographing faraway subjects, and capturing detail not visible to the naked eye, is now possible. Even when shooting handheld at the 35mm equivalent of 2000mm, your images will stay sharp thanks to its five-stop Dual Detect Optical Vibration technology. Accurately tracking fast-moving subjects is easier with its sophisticated rapid target-finding AF system, making this camera perfect for wildlife photographers.

Other cool features include a 16MP CMOS sensor, built-in Wi-Fi, GPS and the ability to shoot time-lapse and full HD video at 1080x60 pixels.

**Guide price** £499.99  
europe-nikon.com



# GEARING UP

## Canon EF 11-24mm f/4L USM ▼

As the world's widest-angle rectilinear zoom lens, Canon's EF 11-24mm f/4L USM is sure to grab the attention of landscape, travel and adventure sports photographers. It has three aspherical lenses including a ground aspherical element to reduce levels of distortion, a near-silent AF system and a minimum aperture of f/22. Along with its advanced lens coatings to guard against ghosting and flare, the lens is housed in a dust and moisture resistant body so it can withstand tough weather conditions.

**Guide price** £2,799.99  
canon.co.uk



## Craghoppers Microfibre travel towel ▼

Part of Craghoppers' new Travel Accessories collection, this microfibre travel towel is an essential item for any travel or adventure photographer looking to keep their pack light. Made from Terry towel fabric, it can absorb a large amount of moisture and dries quickly. It comes with a mesh stuff sack and is available in large and super large sizes.

**Guide price** £20  
craghoppers.com



## Lowepro ProTactic backpack 450 AW ▼

Although designed to appeal to urban photographers, we reckon Lowepro's ProTactic series – a new range of super-robust backpacks – will also appeal to landscapers. The pack has four separate openings (at the top, back and at both sides), so you can quickly access your kit. The outside of the pack features a SlipLock attachment strap system, allowing you to create limitless setups for the gear you want instant access to. Its ActivZone System technology targets support at the shoulder blades, lumbar and waist, providing extra comfort when on the move.

**Guide price** £210  
lowepro.co.uk





## Case Logic Kontrast pro-DSLR backpack ▼

Case Logic's new Kontrast collection is made from tough, water-resistant EVA-molded DuraBase to give ultimate protection to your kit. The Kontrast pro-DSLR backpack fits a professional camera, four to eight lenses, a 15-inch laptop and a tripod. It also has numerous pockets to store memory cards, filters and other accessories. Its suspended hammock system safeguards your gear from shocks.

**Guide price** £129.99  
caselogic.com



## Alpkit Filoment vest ▼

Passionate about providing gear that enhances your outdoor experiences, Alpkit is increasing its clothing range in 2015. One of the first new garments to be released is the Filoment vest – an item that's perfect for unpredictable spring weather. Providing excellent warmth for your body's core from its 650+ down fill, this lightweight and windproof vest is available in both men's and women's sizes.

**Guide price** £79  
alpkit.com



## Colour Confidence NEC SpectraView Reference 322UHD ▼

The most expensive piece of kit on this month's must-have list, but one that uses truly cutting-edge technology, Colour Confidence's NEC SpectraView is a professional performance monitor aimed at those who require absolute image quality and colour accuracy. This 10-bit display monitor has an IPS-type LEC backlit panel that reproduces a true wide gamut result, 42-bit colour control and gamma correction. Its IGZO technology delivers high definition output of 3840x2160 pixels.

**Guide price** £3,686.40  
colourconfidence.com



## Nikon DSLR D810A ▼

Nikon's latest camera is the first FX-format DSLR engineered specifically for one of the most exciting genres in photography at the moment: astrophotography. Enhancing your images of the cosmos, specialised functions of the D810A include a 36.3MP FX-format sensor, a native ISO of 200-12800 (extendable up to 51200), Nikon's impressive EXPEED 4 image processor (to minimise colour fringing), plus a shooting mode that allows long exposures of up to 900 seconds. Its key feature, however, is the inbuilt infrared cut filter, which, unlike regular DSLRs, is four times more sensitive to capturing the true colour of nebulae.

**Guide price** £2,999.99  
europe-nikon.com



## Ricoh WG-5 GPS ▲

Ricoh's latest compact camera is packed full of features that will entice the most adventurous photographers. Fully waterproof when submerged down to 14 metres for up to two hours, the WG-5 GPS is great for trying out underwater photography. Shockproof against falls from heights of 2.2 metres, cold resistant to temperatures as low as -10°C and crushproof to pressure up to 100kg, this camera will perform in the most demanding conditions. It can also record full HD video at 1920x1080 pixels, has a 16MP CMOS sensor and a 4x optical zoom lens.

**Guide price** £259.99  
ricoh-imaging.co.uk



# Canon EOS 7D MkII

Building on the performance of its popular predecessor, the Canon EOS 7D MkII is even faster and more powerful than before.

Andy Luck puts it to the test

**Guide price** £1,600 (body only)

**Contact** [canon.co.uk](http://canon.co.uk)



below The atmosphere and subtle tones of a wintry river Thames, realistically captured by the camera's new CMOS sensor and Dual Digic 6 processors.

*Canon EOS 7D MkII with EF 24-105mm f/4 IS USM lens, ISO 100, 1/80sec at f/11*

below (right) The subtly different shades of lichen, faithfully reproduced by the much improved JPEG output from the new camera. *Canon EOS 7D MkII with EF 24-105mm f/4 IS USM lens, ISO 100, 1/200sec at f/4*

It's hard to believe that it is the best part of five years since the original workhorse, the APS-C format Canon EOS 7D, with its remarkable 8fps shooting rate, was first introduced. That's a long time for a camera to remain on the market unaltered, and testament to the 7D's strengths, perhaps.

Its successor, the EOS 7D MkII is big, chunky and fully weather sealed – more in line with a full-frame pro DSLR than an APS-C format camera. It is almost as large and heavy as Canon's full-frame EOS 5D MkIII, a camera with which it shares an almost identical control layout.

The maximum frame rate has been increased to an impressive 10fps, ideal for wildlife and sports. The new autofocus system is equally class leading, featuring 65 AF points that are well spread out, and all of which are cross-type (when using lenses with a maximum aperture of f/5.6 or faster). The centre AF point, meanwhile, can focus with

a maximum aperture of f/8.

There is also a new autofocus area selection lever surrounding the joystick cursor control. When the AF area button has been pressed, it is possible to quickly click through the focus point selection options without removing the camera from the eye.

In terms of speed, then, there is currently little competition in the APS-C arena that gives such a seemingly indestructible and professional feel. In burst mode, frames are rattled off with a very well dampened mirror – and a shutter sound that is addictive!

In terms of performance, the EOS 7D MkII could almost serve as an APS-C

equivalent of Canon's flagship EOS 1DX for those who want more reach from their telephoto lenses for a lot less money. This is something that Nikon can't really match, having so far failed to replace the greatly missed, professional spec APS-C format D300.

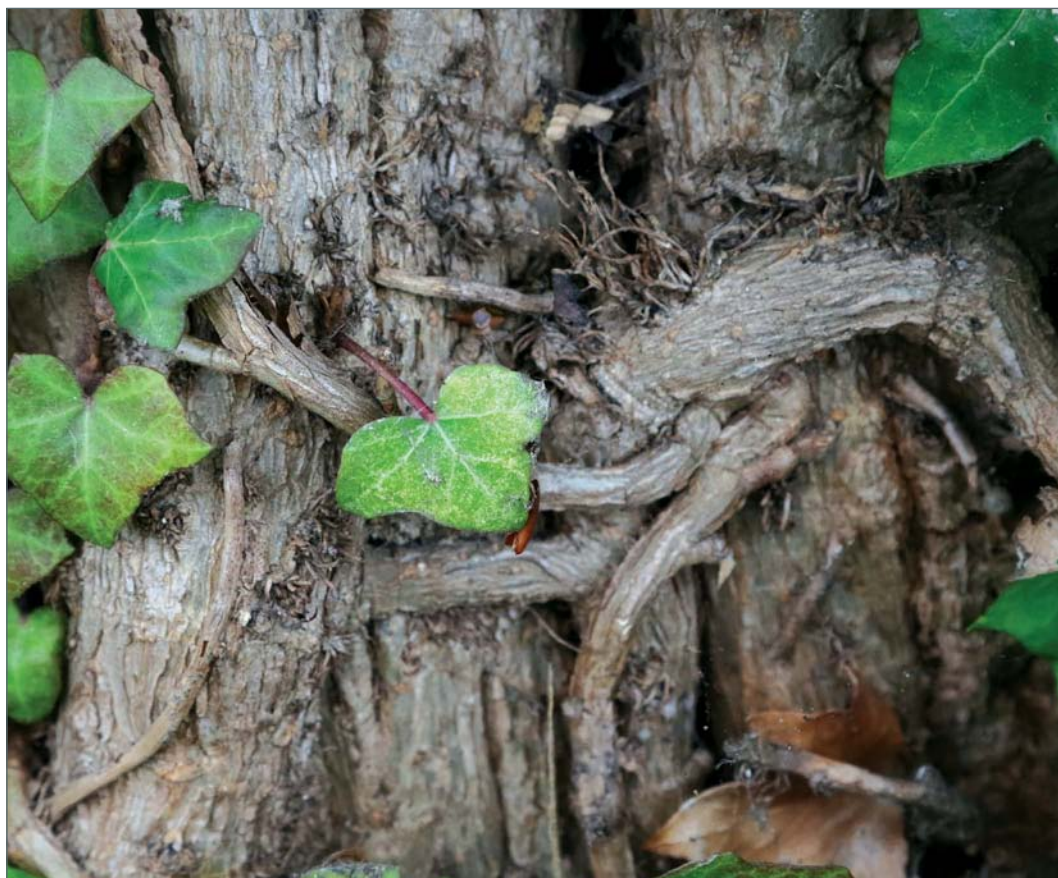
The 7D MkII has a number of new features we could not have imagined five years ago, such as a compass, GPS system, multi-exposure mode, interval timer and HDR mode. There are also twin card slots for SD and CF cards. Essentially, however, it is all about performance with the 7D MkII. Apart from the marginal increase to 20.2MP on the sensor, there are few other concessions to the current trend of piling on the gadgetry and features, an aspect





that some photographers, at least, may well applaud.

Surprisingly, however, there is no Wi-Fi – something that may not just be an issue for those wanting to share their images easily via social media; many news and sports professionals have been using Wi-Fi to deliver their work straight to picture desks for years. There is no touchscreen or articulating screen, either. The latter seems a fairly major omission when cameras such as the new Nikon D750 (reviewed in OP188) feature a tilt-screen. I found this proved to be incredibly useful, while not compromising the build unduly. The articulating touchscreen worked so well on the lower spec Canon EOS 700D and the 70D, too, so it seems an odd decision not to include it on the 7D MkII. This is a pity, because the dual-pixel AF tracking, silent controls and flicker correction of the 7D MkII make it a good camera to operate in video mode, and a touchscreen would have made it easier to move focus point without jogging the camera. An articulated screen also makes high and low angle shooting so much more convenient in stills mode. It's also



## TECH SPEC

**Sensor** 22.4x15mm APS-C CMOS 20.2MP  
**Crop** 1.6x  
**Resolution** 5472x3648  
**Autofocus** TTL-CT-SIR with dedicated CMOS sensor, 65 all-cross AF points  
**Maximum frame rate** 10fps  
**ISO sensitivity** 100-16000, (51200 expanded)  
**Shutter speeds** 30-1/8000sec  
**Processor** Dual Digic 6  
**Monitor** 3in Clear View II TFT-LCD 1,040,000 dots  
**Viewfinder** Optical 100% coverage  
**Flash** Built-in GN11  
**Connections** USB 3.0, GPS, HDMI mini output  
**GPS** Built-in  
**Power** LP-E6N battery  
**Size** 148.6x112.4x78.2mm  
**Weight** 910g



a shame not to have focus peaking or zebras, which are becoming common on the better video-equipped DSLRs these days.

The video quality also lacks a bit of crispness compared to modern competitors such as the Panasonic GH4 and the Sony A7S. For this reason, the 7D MkII might be a better option for those who are more interested in high-speed stills capture rather than cutting edge video quality.

The Dual Digic 6 processors certainly maintain that outstanding performance edge for stills, with burst mode capabilities going up from 25 Raws on the Canon EOS 7D to 31 Raws, and unlimited JPEGs, something Nikon's nearest equivalent APS-C camera, the D7100, cannot get anywhere near.

Overall image quality is very good, with plenty of detail and Canon's pleasingly realistic tonal look. High ISO performance is greatly improved, and the camera is mercifully free of the excess shadow noise and banding that some previous Canons, including the original 7D, have been known for. It does not have quite the magical latitude to push shadows that the Nikon sensor currently offers, however.

## LIKES

- ✓ Bulletproof build
- ✓ 10fps burst mode
- ✓ Autofocus system

## DISLIKES

- ✗ No tilt-screen
- ✗ Spot meter not linked to focus point
- ✗ Limited low ISO latitude

## VERDICT

The increase in megapixels is minimal, but there's a real improvement to image quality, both in terms of noise control at low ISOs and much more usable high ISO performance. The Canon EOS 7D MkII may not quite have all the bells and whistles of some competitors, but what it does, it does very professionally. It has great controls, superb autofocus, an extremely rapid and responsive frame rate and a build quality to rival a tank!

## RATINGS

Handling	94%
Performance	94%
Specification	93%
Value	95%

OVERALL  
94%



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5.0 fps  
1080p movie mode



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full frame CMOS sensor



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1080p movie mode



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6.0 fps  
Full Frame CMOS sensor



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EOS 7D Mark II

20.2 megapixels  
10.0 fps  
1080p movie mode



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## Canon

EOS 5D Mark III

22.3 megapixels  
6.0 fps  
Full Frame CMOS sensor



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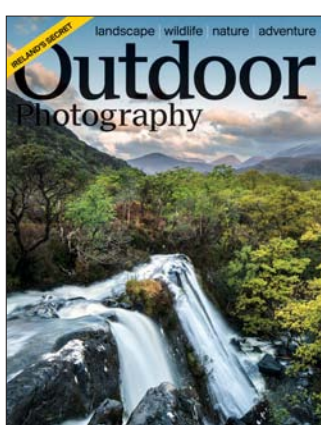
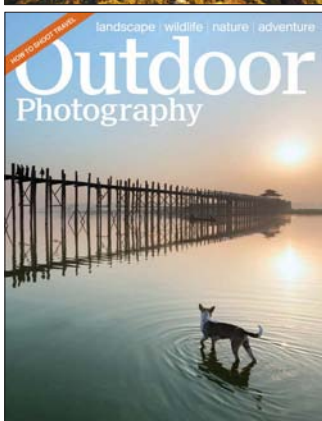
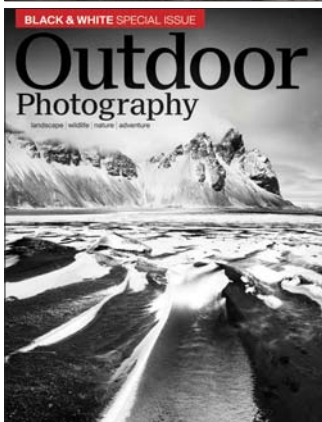
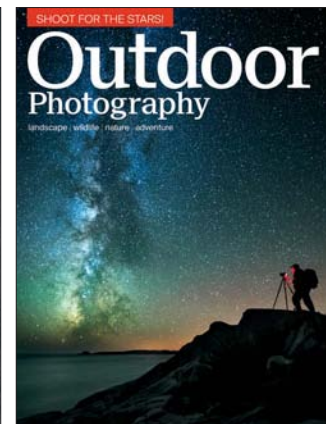
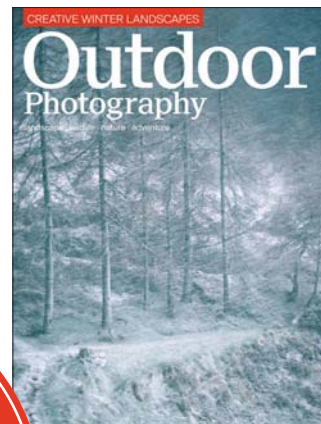
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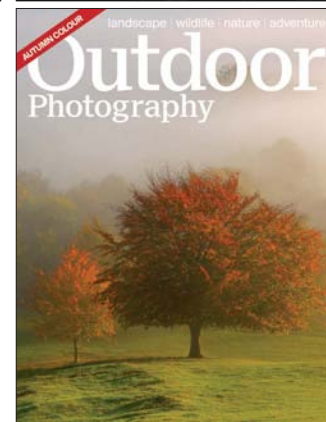
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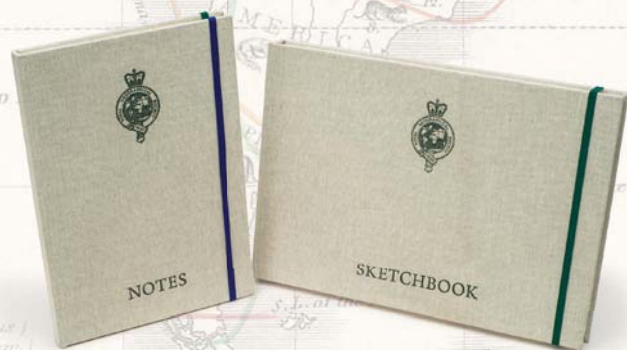
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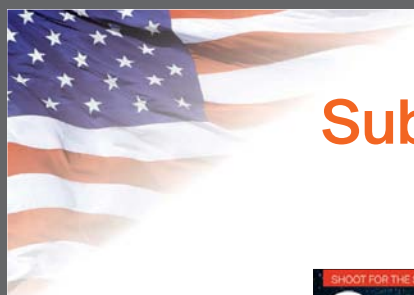
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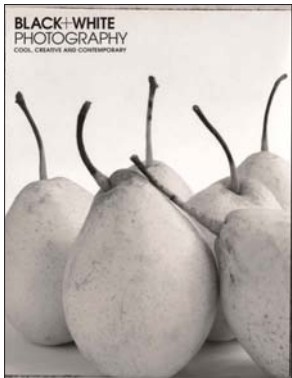
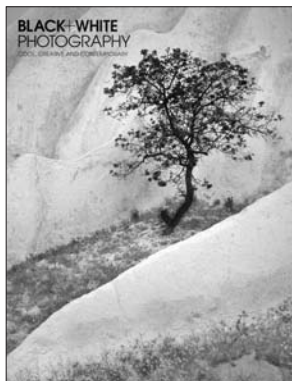
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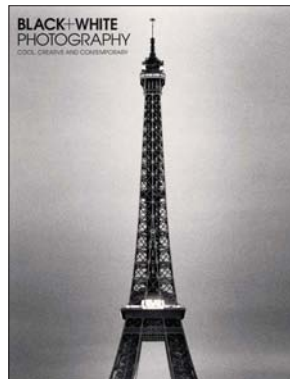
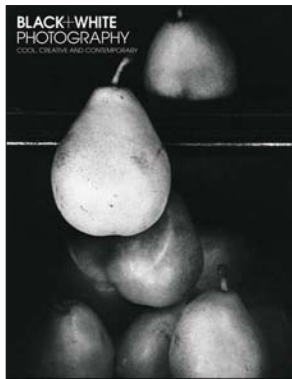
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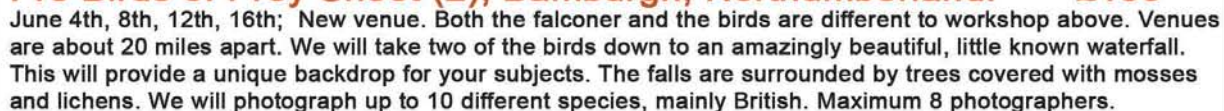
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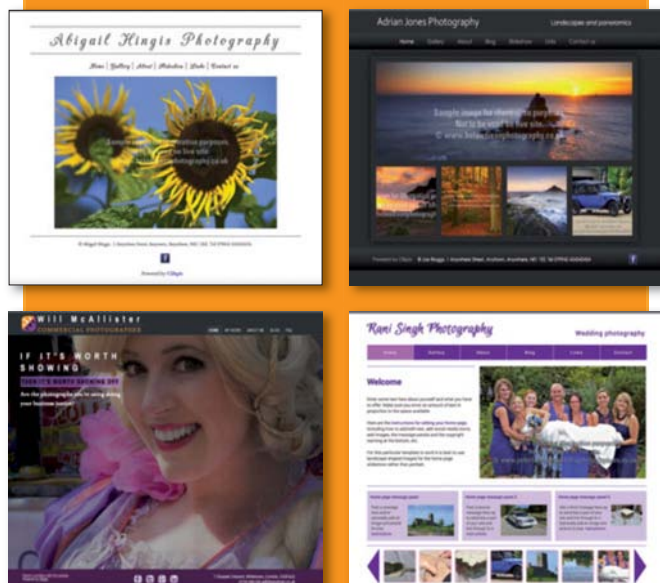


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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

# Creative winter landscapes

*In our January issue we challenged you to capture winter landscapes in creative and imaginative ways, and we were inundated with superb images that encapsulate the spirit of the season. Here's the winner of the Smartwool baselayer, and our 10 runners-up*







## WINNER

### 1/ Malcolm Blenkey

(Opposite) The North York Moors regularly gets a covering of snow during winter. I visited last January in the hope of getting a few shots of the receding hills covered in snow, but I discovered that a thick fog hung over the higher points. The ghostly appearance of the sun piercing through the gloom added to the wintry feel.

*Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon EF 24-105mm f/4 L lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 1/30sec at f/20, 2-stop ND grad, tripod*  
[mblenkeyphotos.co.uk](http://mblenkeyphotos.co.uk)

### 2/ Simon Jauncey

I have driven home many times along this hill road in Perthshire, but a late March snowfall made the geometrical nature of the landscape

jump out at me and I knew I had to stop to try to photograph it. Triangles, parallel and intersecting diagonal lines came together in the scene – all enhanced by the pure white, black and grey tones.

*Sony NEX6 with 55-210mm lens at 55mm, ISO 100, 1/320sec at f/8, handheld*  
[simonjauncey.com](http://simonjauncey.com)

>





5

### 3/ David Shawe

Marley Common in West Sussex. Hazy late afternoon sun filtered through dense young woodland, creating strange colour tones.

The effect was not obvious to the naked eye, but much more evident in the Raw file. I tried various apertures but settled on f/16, which gave a reasonable depth of field.

*Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 24-105mm f/4 L lens at 105mm, ISO 100, 0.3sec at f/16, tripod*

### 4/ Geraint Evans

This is a shot from Buttertubs Pass in Yorkshire, looking north. We had a weekend of heavy snow back in January, so I made sure I got out to make the most of the conditions. Buttertubs is one of the highest passes in the Yorkshire Dales. I spotted this tree through a snow shower and balanced my camera on the drystone wall, shielding it from the snow to get a quick shot. In post-processing I used a graduated filter to bring out the contrast between the sky and the snow, and increased saturation for the grasses.

*Nikon D3100 with Sigma 10-20mm lens at 20mm, ISO 200, 1/15sec at f/11, camera supported on drystone wall*

### 5/ Ric Harding

Lodgepole pine tree trunks in deep snow in Yellowstone National Park, USA. I wanted to create a simple, symmetrical image by using differential focusing to separate the main subjects from the background, while also retaining sufficient detail in the latter to show the wider environment. I achieved this by combining two images in Photoshop, one with the lens focused on the central trunk, the other with the focus point on the two other main trunks.

*Nikon D800 with Nikkor 80-400mm VR lens at 165mm, ISO 800, 1/320sec at f/11, handheld*

### 6/ Brian McCready

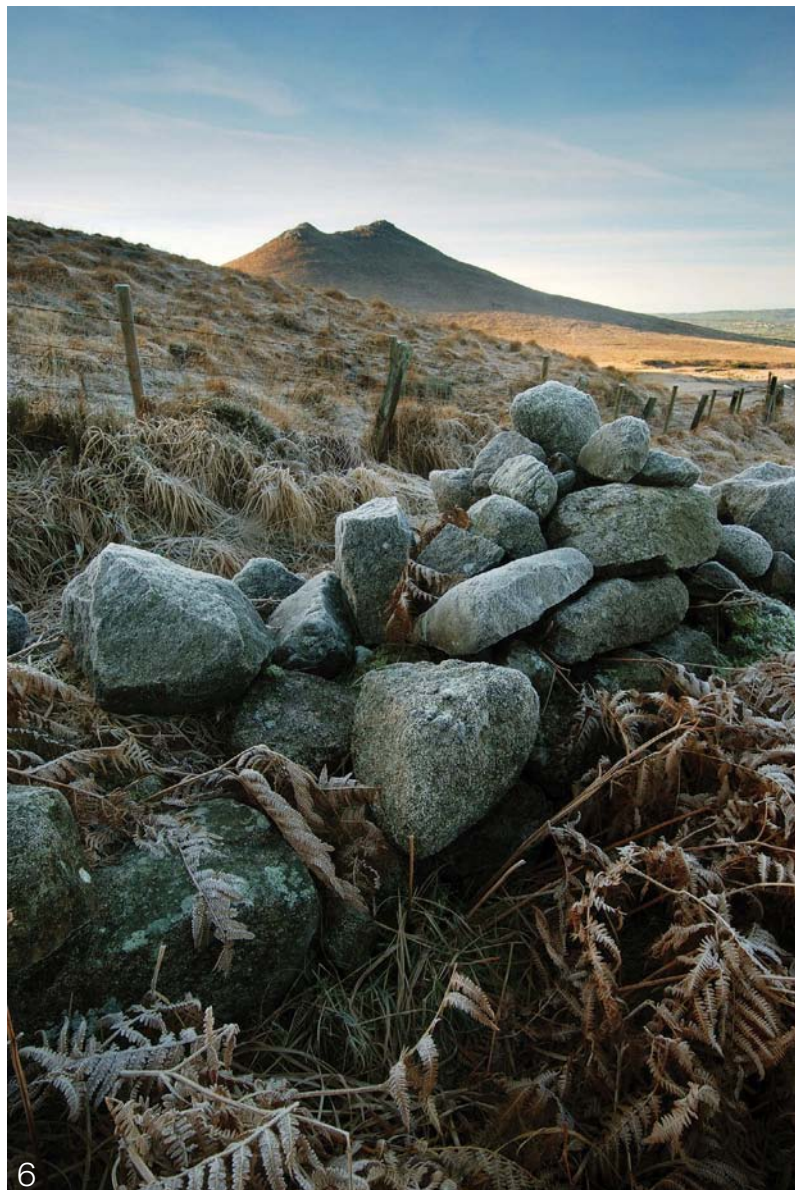
Mourne Mountains, County Down. I took this picture below the Spelga Pass on a very cold winter morning. The sun was beginning to illuminate the slopes of Hen Mountain, melting the overnight ground frost.

*Nikon D80 with Nikon 10-24mm lens at 13mm, ISO 100, 1/10sec at f/14, 0.6 ND grad, tripod*

**brianmccready.com**

### 7/ Kasia Nowak

I took this image during a short stay in Graz,



6

Austria. The park on Schlossberg hill looked like a winter wonderland, and tree branches were heavy with snow. The sky was dull and uninteresting, so I decided to use a telephoto lens and concentrate on details and patterns.

*Nikon D700 with Nikkor 70-300mm VR lens at 230mm, ISO 200, 1/100sec at f/9, tripod*

**kasianowak.com**

### 8/ Jack Simpson

This image of Lairig Gartain, Glencoe, was taken from the western slope of Ben a'Chrulaiste on a typical, overcast January day. I left Glasgow early that morning, with the intention of shooting atmospheric images of Buachaille Etive Mòr and its surroundings.

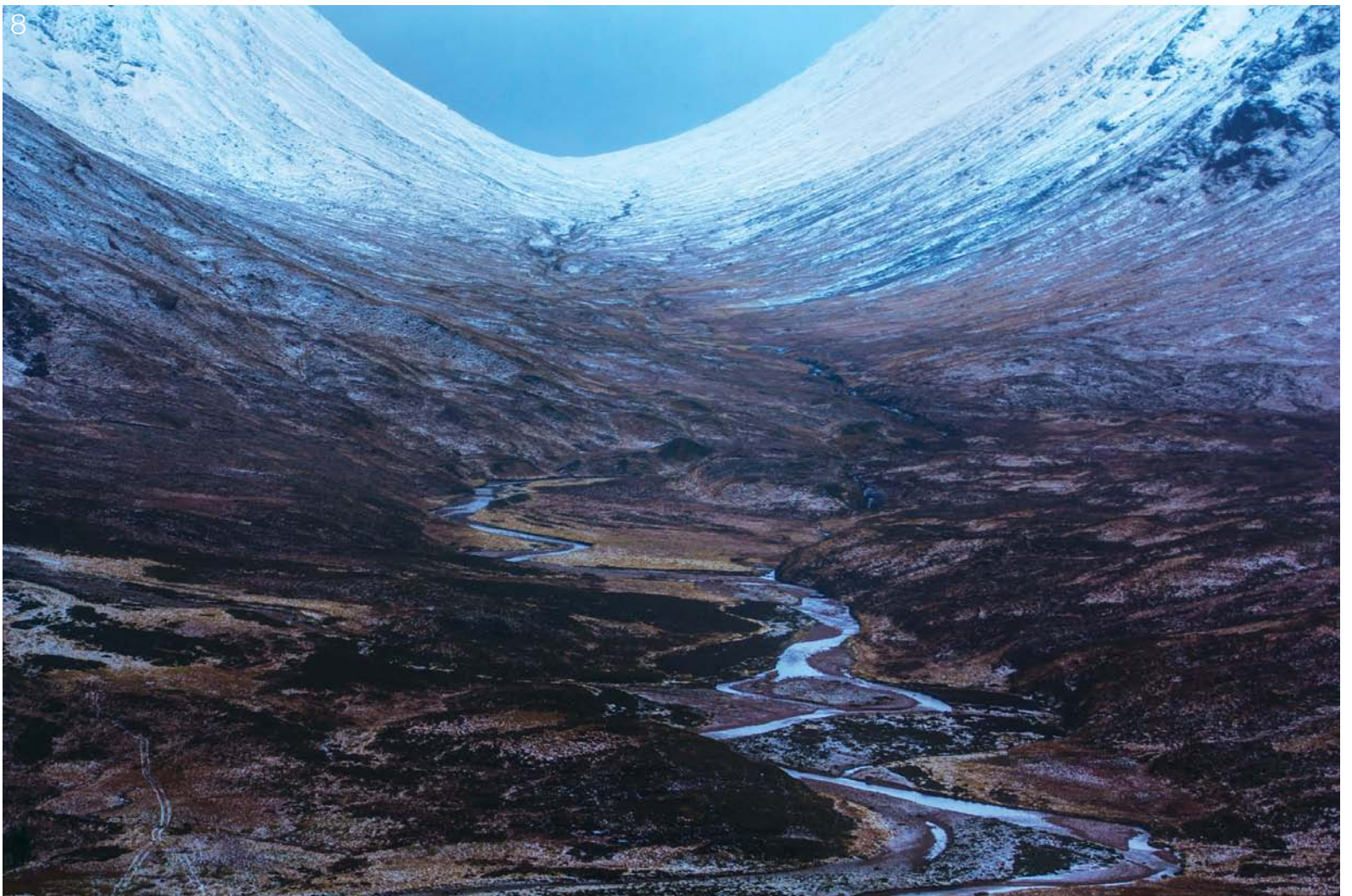
*Canon EOS 550D with Tamron 18-270mm lens at 65mm, ISO 160, 1/125sec at f/5, tripod, levels adjusted in Lightroom 5*

**jacksimpson.photography**

### 9/ Mark Helliwell

I took this image from the junction of Near Black Clough and Middle Black Clough in the Longendale Valley in the Peak District, after visiting an impressive waterfall further up the









9



10





11

river. I was struck by the contrast between the white frost on the vegetation and the dark, iron-coloured water of the two rivers. Movement of the foam in the river was emphasised through the use of a neutral density filter.

*Nikon D800 with Nikkor 16-35mm VR lens at 27mm, ISO 100, 1.6sec at f/16, 3-stop ND filter, tripod*  
markhelliwell.com

#### 10/ Sandra Kepkowska

The image was taken from Corn Du in the Brecon Beacons National Park at sunrise; it shows the summit of Pen y Fan. The previous night's mist had cleared, and the morning brought frost and good light.

*Nikon D4 with Nikkor 16-35mm VR lens at 35mm, ISO 100, 1/6sec at f/22, tripod*  
sklandscapephotography.co.uk

#### 11/ Aidan Maccormick

Stand of oak trees near St John's Town of Dalry in Dumfries & Galloway. By capturing the movement of the snowflakes and converting to black & white I transformed the scene into an eerie Grimm's fairytale-like landscape.

*Nikon D600 with Nikkor 24-85mm f/3.5 lens at 85mm, ISO 400, 1/30sec at f/8, handheld*  
maragorm.com

## YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

### Panoramic landscapes

This month we're inviting you to explore the exciting world of panoramic photography.

Thanks to advances in stitching software, it has never been easier to create stunning images on your home computer – from epic mountain views to sweeping seascapes and urban vistas. The technique doesn't just cover horizontal views – why not try taking a vertical slice out of a scene, or shoot a planet panorama that captures a full 360° view? The key to success is to follow a few simple steps.

Be sure to read Lee Frost's feature on page 28 for tips on how to nail this technique and inspire us with your best panoramic images – we can't wait to see what you come up with!

### Enter and you could win a superb Manfrotto Befree tripod, worth £174.95!

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**Closing date for entries is 8 June 2015.**

See page 84 for an entry form and our terms and conditions.







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## Where is it?

The image shows one of the world's most imposing 8,000m peaks, one that strikes fear into all who attempt to climb it. But is it:

- a) **Mount Everest, Nepal Himalaya**
- b) **Kangchengjunga, Sikkim Himalaya**
- c) **K2, Karakorum**

The correct answer and the winner's name will be published in OP194 (on sale 2 July). Send your answer to [opcomp@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:opcomp@thegmcgroup.com), stating 'High mountain' as the subject, or drop it in the post to: Where in the world – 'High mountain', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN.

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## JANUARY ISSUE WINNER

In OP188 we asked you to name the location of the shipwreck featured in the photograph. The correct answer is:

- a) **Grytviken, South Georgia**



The winner of the Hanwag Nazcat GTX boots is Paul Hartley from Kirby Bedon, Norwich.





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